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HOISTING THE UNION JACK. BY ALFRED HUNT.

PLANTING THE UNION JACK.

Not mid the din of battle,
With musketry's sharp rattle
And cannon's thunderous roar, the death-shriek piercing all,—
As you may read in story,
Some Middy, fired with glory,
When yard-arms interlocked, groped through the smoky pall,
And made his way undaunted
To where French colours flaunted,
Then tore them down and planted our ensign in their stead;
And with the French flag round him
On his own deck they found him,
Our gallant little Middy, shot through the heart stone dead.

Not thus,—but in the season
When moody care is treason,
The gracious Christmas season, amid Home's hallowed glee,
Three fair girls watch their mother
Lift high their younger brother
To plant the Union Jack atop the Christmas-Tree.

"Now, Poppet, firm and steady!
Well done, my darling Freddy!
Aim high, and strike for right, by deed and tongue and pen,
Despite all scorn and laughter,
Throughout your whole hereafter!"
Thus spake the fair young mother; the father cried, "Amen!"

For father's pet, Miss Milly,
Had coaxed him, willy-nilly,
From out his study chair to take his rightful part
In this to her enchanting
Triumphal act of planting
The Union Jack to crown their dainty work of art.

So father leads the cheering,
For Christmas Day is nearing,
And here the Christmas-Tree stands pranked in jaunty pride,
With gayest gauds bedighted,
And ready to be lighted,
Save for one toy the maid seems loth to lay aside.

For some time in the old year
Her sweetheart turned a soldier,
Which made of her bright eyes two founts of scalding tears.
Since then our buxom Mary
Dotes on the military,
And sees her lad a sergeant in the coming years.

O Home! celestial focus!
By some sweet hocus-pocus
All low thoughts in you die, and noble ones have birth;
In your transfiguring splendour
Of love's glad self-surrender
Home seems a gleam of heaven flashed on this planet earth.

Who but a wife and mother
Befits this home? None other.
To heaven's vicegerent ever the household all incline—
However fluctuating,
Around her gravitating,
As planets round the sun, in harmony divine.

Ah! blessed beyond measure
The home that holds the treasure,
A loving wife and mother, who rules with wondrous skill;
By Love's keen circumvention,
Its watchful apprehension,
Full oft in the intention is nipped some budding ill.

To mild words much beholden,
Yet more to silence golden,
She rules her house with firmness, though circumspectly still;
The reins are held so lightly
That checks are felt but slightly,
The household moving rightly, as of their own free will.

By all she loves surrounded,
Her heaven by home is bounded;
There centre all delights and all her hopes and fears:
Her children's pleasant prattle,
Their merriest, noisiest rattle,
Is to the mother's ears blest music of the spheres.

O glorious Christmas season!
Of Love and Faith and Reason
The yearly festival, replete with warmth and light;
From which we gladly borrow
Some antidote to sorrow,
Hoping for bright to-morrow e'en in our blackest night.

Yet art thou not all pleasure:
Mid thy abundant treasure
We sigh for something new or that no more appears—
Hearts passionately yearning
For someone unreturning,
Seen through a mist of tears in all the coming years.

The fire on Faith's own altar,
Unfed, will feebly falter,
And give a flickering ray that is not night or day;
But, fed with pure thoughts chrismal,
The flame, erewhile so dismal,
Bursts into beacon light to guide us on our way.

O gleesome Christmas season!
What strange fruits hang your trees on!
Clustering like swarms of bees on orchard boughs alight.
In what fair clime first grew you?
What loving genii blew you
From Fairyland to bless our children with your sight?

Some trees, perversely growing,
Have first their blossoms blowing;
Some once a hundred years bear flowers upon their head;
Some flourish when long ages
Are scored upon their pages;
And others fish for oysters, and catch them, too, 'tis said.

While these show cause for wonder,
A Christmas-Tree, jocunder,
Has its anomalies to puzzle the acute—
In winter-time best growing,
At Christmas all a-blowing—
A magic tree that gleams from toyshops all its fruit!

Hurrah! the tree is lighted!
And you are here invited,
Good girls and boys, delighted, the glorious sight to see.
I mark your bright eyes gleaming,
I hear your gleesome screaming—
Ah, little were you dreaming of such a Christmas Tree!

JOHN LATEY.

BARBARA GILDERDALE.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL,
AUTHOR OF "GEORGE GEITH," "CITY AND SUBURB," &c.

CHAPTER I.

As a matter of certainty I must have known Barbara Gilderdale all her life; but my memory holds no recollection of her until I was thirteen.

Young gentlemen aged seven have more important affairs to attend to than babies, and my entrance into the world predated that of Miss Gilderdale by about the time mentioned.

Of her mother I had in the course of my then short life heard enough and to spare. Not a lady in Rowford could pay a visit exceeding ten minutes in duration without recurring to a subject which never seemed to wear threadbare.

"What men in general had been able to see in Fanny Allenson" as a girl baffled the penetration of her sex; what "Lieutenant Gilderdale in particular could behold in her to induce him to peril his prospects and quarrel with his family for her sake" puzzled her female acquaintances still more; and how Mr. Sternland, that nice, refined, gentlemanly creature, possessed of a handsome income, was trapped into marrying her when a widow with one ugly child proved an enigma that never, so far as I am aware, was solved to the satisfaction of my aunt's lady visitors; and, indeed, considering they had not been able to answer their various questions while Mrs. Sternland was young, it was little likely they should ever do so in later years.

As a schoolboy, even I sometimes wondered at the fact of Barbara's mother having secured two not ineligible husbands; but as a man I better understood wherein her charm lay.

She had good eyes, a sweet, placid face, wonderful grace of movement, a low, soft voice, and a manner as attractive as it was quiet. She wore a shawl better than any Englishwoman I ever met with, and she walked—well, I never saw such a walk—easy, natural, perfect. It was quite a pleasure to see her cross a room; and to watch her proceeding along any of our streets accompanied by another lady was at once to draw invidious comparisons not in favour of her companion.

Beside her, other women looked awkward—perhaps that was why other women did not love her. But no; I will not be so unjust to the female Rowfordians; there were better reasons in plenty why my aunt's visitors criticised Mrs. Sternland severely.

All her early life she spent with her grandfather, an old naval officer, whose temper was as short as his stories were long, and whose oaths were as deep as his potatoes.

A gentleman not easy to get on with domestically, as may well be imagined, and yet no one ever knew Miss Allenson to cross his whims or to speak an evil word concerning him. In those days the matrons of Rowford pitied the young girl, and held up her temper as an ensample to their own less sweet-natured daughters.

But those daughters were shrewd enough—being behind the scenes a little—to comprehend that Miss Fanny's amiability was in reality only a combination of three undesirable qualities—indifference, selfishness, and laziness. Let the Captain shout fit to bring The Chestnuts about everybody's ears, Fanny never changed colour. She only mixed his grog the stronger, and cast out one devil from his system by introducing another.

If his shirts were frayed and the place of buttons supplied by pins, why, Fanny could merely deplore such facts, and the matrons believed "that dreadful old man" would not let her have the wherewithal to amend his outward deficiencies. Fanny's companions knew, however, that the boisterous old sailor liked his handkerchiefs to be hemmed and his socks darned as well as their own fathers, only the matter was that Captain Allenson could not exactly have everything he wanted, unless, indeed, "everything" meant plenty of liquor, with bad language to follow as well as precede.

Many a man, I fancy, has compounded for the loss of all most people hold dear if permitted to follow his own evil bent in those two particulars; and so, to cut this part of my story short, Miss Allenson, with an amiability scarcely worthy of imitation, was as indifferent to the amount her grandfather drank as to the state of his wardrobe.

Eventually the Captain died, leaving behind him enough furniture to pay his small debts, to purchase mourning for Fanny and the servants, and to provide sufficient money for his funeral expenses—not a halfpenny more. The Rowford matrons were sympathetic; many of them asked Miss Allenson on an indefinite visit, and they all felt really grieved when their kindly intentions were frustrated by a certain Aunt Betsy, sister of Fanny's mother, proposing to take the young girl as companion.

"I have heard a very good report of you, my dear," said that terrible female, surveying Miss Allenson through a pair of old-fashioned spectacles, "and I hope we shall get on very well together."

"I am sure we shall," answered Fanny, as she embraced an ancient fur tippet and a spare frame, with effusion, and so that bargain was sealed. Aunt and niece started for Honneford, many and many a mile distant, and nothing more of interest was heard of "poor dear Fanny" for three years.

At the end of that time Aunt Betsy paid the debt of nature—punctually, and without carping, as she had paid all other debts in her honest life; but she left only a hundred pounds to her dear niece and companion, Frances Allenson. The remainder of her property she willed to various charities, societies, and hospitals.

Once again the Rowford matrons were sympathetic and kind, and amongst them an elderly lady, who had been a bosom friend of Fanny's mother, was kinder and more sympathetic than anyone else.

In a moment of enthusiasm she offered herself, her house, her men-servants, and her maid-servants, to the dear Fanny, and the dear Fanny, with tears, accepted all the good things Mrs. Bell's generosity placed at her disposal.

Before, however, Miss Allenson had been back in Rowford many months her popularity amongst the feminine portion of its inhabitants began to wane. About the same time, it may be observed, the male Rowfordians were becoming very enthusiastic on the subject of that "charming Miss Allenson."

From the Curate to the Archdeacon—Rowford boasted an Archdeacon; from Billy, the half-witted crossing-sweeper, to my own father, who really ought to have known better, every man in the town was wholly or partially smitten with "pretty Fanny." Twenty times a day reasons were found for passing Bayview-terrace, where Mrs. Bell held state, and happy indeed was the man or boy who caught a glimpse of Miss Allenson as she bent over her embroidery-frame or looked at her flowers in the balcony.

At that period no other girl in Rowford had a chance. It was not a fair fight, Miss Allenson's lady friends decided; and with reason. Possessed of every advantage of residence and surroundings, how should the graceful Fanny fail to achieve success? Was not Mrs. Bell's house the very best in Rowford? Had not that lady rooms spacious and well-furnished wherein to receive her guests? Had she not the most respectable of butlers and the cleverest of maids? Did she not affect hot

luncheons, then an almost unprecedented luxury in Rowford? and could not any man, if he were only possessed of sufficient assurance, obtain a welcome at her hospitable table?

It was not a fair fight. Men saw Miss Allenson with every accessory about her that a large fortune in her own right could have given her. True, she had not the large fortune, which was a drawback; but then fortunes of any kind were rare in Rowford; indeed, most of the inhabitants who pretended to any social standing were poor as church mice; certainly none of the fair Fanny's rivals were well dowered; and, what seemed almost as serious a trouble, not one of them had a fairy godmother, in the shape of a Mrs. Bell, to provide them with coach and horses, and ball dresses, and glass slippers, and all manner of lovely adornments wherewith to captivate the prince.

"If ever," so affirmed the matrons of Rowford, "any woman was completely deceived—not to say fooled—that woman was Circassia Bell. She had taken a viper into her bosom, and some day she would repent her misplaced charity."

The critical portion of Rowford had long exchanged the word generosity for charity, an alteration in terms which clearly expressed its opinion of the recipient of Mrs. Bell's kindness.

After all, let her have what faults she would, Miss Allenson was never a viper. She had no intention of deceiving anybody. She liked to please other people, if by pleasing them she could please herself; and a long experience of trying to delight those two masters, herself and others who could serve her, might have produced a certain manner bordering on deception.

Otherwise, she was straightforward enough—so straightforward, indeed, and so mentally and physically incapable of keeping up even the semblance of duplicity when brought into very close contact with her benefactors, that eventually she tired everyone out.

Mrs. Bell certainly tired of her, but Fanny Allenson was as certainly one of those women who always find one door open when another is shut. She was among those of her sex who view with calm indifference the possibility of "where the sun may set on them."

Just about the time when Mrs. Bell began to imagine her swan might turn out a goose, Lieutenant Gilderdale appeared upon the scene. Of many adorers, he was the one who came to the point. A favourite, though a younger, son, he thought himself justified in marrying for love, and, perhaps—but this can never now be known—he mistook the position of his "ladye faire."

At any rate, he did propose. He was accepted. Mrs. Bell paid for the trousseau and gave the wedding breakfast.

Everything was done in the most orthodox style; not a flounce did the bride's dress lack; not a maid but assisted at the ceremony with every token of good-will.

The Archdeacon joined the couple fast enough, and graced the subsequent banquet with his genial face.

And yet there was just the one addition needful wanting. Not a relative of the bridegroom put in an appearance or sent a single line of congratulation.

When he read the news of his youngest son's marriage, Squire Gilderdale solemnly crossed Laurence Gilderdale's name out of the family records, and believed he had performed a good and creditable day's work.

CHAPTER II.

In less than a twelvemonth Mrs. Laurence Gilderdale was once more amongst her old friends at Rowford, and again those old friends welcomed her kindly. Harder hearts, indeed, than those they possessed might have been touched by the sight of the girl who had left them a bride, returning a widow.

Only one little year had elapsed since the grand wedding in Bayview-terrace, and now when people went to call on Mrs. Gilderdale she received them in lodgings situated on Pier-walk, a very different locality indeed from that of her former triumphs. If Fanny had any ulterior object in coming back to Rowford—that is to say, if she ever hoped Mrs. Bell might repeat herself, and proffer hospitality once again, that lady speedily undeceived her.

"If I were you, Fanny," said her former benefactress, on the occasion of her first visit to the lodgings in Pier-walk, "I would take a small house—that cottage of Nettleton's is to be rented for a mere trifle; you will be far more comfortable in a little place of your own, and I daresay I can spare you enough furniture to make a couple of rooms habitable. You might let the house, perhaps, in the season, or even take a nice lady to board with you. What do you say?"

Mrs. Gilderdale did not say much, but she let her friend understand that her views with regard to the future were undecided.

"She did not think she would take a house—for the present at all events. She did not wish to tie herself. Perhaps," she suggested, "after my child is born, Laurence's father and mother may relent."

"Not in the least degree likely, my dear," Mrs. Bell declared. "There are plenty of children among the Gilderdales already, and I believe the old Squire is a man who never forgives or forgets."

Fanny sighed, and looked out wearily over the water.

"Ah, well," she said, gently, "we shall see." She believed in her husband's mother; she had great faith that, sooner or later, the old lady would show some kindness to her favourite son's widow. Always before, friends had arisen to help her. Why should not friends arise to help her now?

At last the baby came. She had hoped it would be a boy whom she could call after its dead father and its living grandfather, and make a bond between herself and her husband's family; and when the child proved to be a girl she looked upon the small creature with as little favour as the most dispassionate stranger.

"As plain an infant as ever came into this wicked world," confided the nurse to her gossips; "does not favour her mamma the least in the world, nor, for that matter, her father either. And, of all names in the world, missus is going to christen it 'Barbara.' After the grandmother, I believe! Well, it is to be hoped she will take to it, for, if she does not, nobody else is very likely to make much of it."

Duly and truly Mrs. Laurence Gilderdale, of Rowford, announced the fact of her baby's advent to Mrs. Gilderdale, of The Grange. As duly and as truly her letter was returned through the medium of the family solicitor, who requested that no other communication should be addressed to Mrs. Gilderdale by the widow of Lieutenant Laurence Gilderdale.

This was a blow for which Fanny had not prepared herself, and she fretted more than was her wont as she looked at her child and considered her position.

Living as she did quietly, and having apparently few wants, she might have managed to make both ends meet had it not been for the demon of "muddle" that pervaded all her arrangements. The same shiftlessness which had characterised the interior economy of "The Chestnuts" obtained in the lodgings on Pier-walk. Call at what hour they would, visitors always found Mrs. Gilderdale's rooms in a litter—her baby either asleep on some improvised couch in the parlour, or in a frightful state of dishabille cooing over some article utterly unsuited to be in its possession.

Of regular meals Mrs. Gilderdale seemed not to have the faintest idea. She never had any dinner, but "made shift," as her little servant expressed it, with eggs, or a piece of bacon, or a bit of fish with her tea, of which latter article of diet she seemed, judging from a perpetual tray and disreputable-looking kettle, to be eternally partaking.

In full faith that the Gilderdales would come to see her or ask her to go and see them, she had spared no expense about her mourning, and it scandalised the careful mind of many a Rowford lady to behold the widow's crape and paramatta dragging over the shingle and wet sand of the sea-shore. Her baby, too, was always either fine or grimy—either a mass of cambric and lace, or presented for view in a night-dress; and yet still, spite of her carelessness and her extravagance, or perhaps, indeed, because of the mental qualities which produced both, Mrs. Gilderdale, even in that golden time at Bayview-terrace, was never so popular amongst the male sex as in her cheap lodgings in Pier-walk.

Her manners were more charming than ever; her eyes just as fine as of yore; her position was one which touched masculine sympathies; and she always made her visitors welcome.

The baby could be taken away and the teapot replenished. She was always ready with apologies, but she made no fuss. She had some talent for music; played well and sang sweetly. If there were less money than at Mrs. Bell's, there was also less formality, and for these, and no doubt many other good reasons, the gentlemen of Rowford, began once again to pay court to the fair Fanny, who was now called the "pretty widow," and public opinion exercised itself as to whether she would marry the Curate or young Mr. Delfield, her solicitor. Both were known to be very fond of her; and, as the Curate had some private means and Mr. Delfield a good business, society failed to make up its mind as to which she would accept.

Once again, however, Fanny astonished the Rowfordians. Without the slightest preparation for such a shock, she announced her engagement to Mr. Sternland, a gentleman upon whom every spinster in the town had cast longing eyes in vain.

"Well!" said Mrs. Bell, "I never was so astonished in all my life."

"Well, I never did! Law, never!" exclaimed little Miss Potter, who kept the fancy shop in the High-street; and the whole of Rowford, with a wonderful unanimity, echoed these remarks.

After Captain Allenson's death Mr. Sternland had bought The Chestnuts, and lived in that residence with an elderly housekeeper and a housemaid who was not so young as she could have wished to be considered.

The Chestnuts was the pink of neatness; not a crooked blind ever disfigured the front of the house in the days of Mr. Sternland and his prim housekeeper. The owner himself always looked as if he had just been turned out of a band-box: snowy shirts, well-starched collars, well-brushed hats, coats innocent of a spot—the very impersonation, in fact, of a thoroughly well-dressed and very particular middle-aged bachelor. And that he should propose for Mrs. Gilderdale!—he who had a pet aversion for widows, and who loved neatness as he loved good living!

"After this, another deluge!" commented Rowford; and, really, another deluge could not have astonished Rowford more.

In due time Mr. Sternland took home his bride. The happy pair went to Paris for their honeymoon, and on their return, of course, everyone who was anyone in Rowford called upon Mrs. Sternland.

Amongst others my aunt, dressed all in her best, went to offer her congratulations, and for some reason I, then a boy of nine, was permitted to accompany her.

Never shall I forget the change which had come over the spirit of Mr. Sternland's house. Fastened upon my memory, probably by my aunt's comments on the subject—comments delivered for her brother-in-law's benefit at our early tea—are the untidy servant who answered the door—the stair-carpet covered with already dirty drugget—the before carefully shaded drawing-room with all the blinds up, and the windows wide open, apparently to let the sun take every scrap of colour out of the amber damask curtains—the canary spilling his water and cheerfully singing over sprigs of groundsel and seeds springled plentifully beneath his cage—the fluffly little dog exercising his young teeth on the hearthrug—the cat curled up beside some broken toys—and last, but by no means least, Mrs. Sternland herself, in a puce-coloured velvet dress, covered so thickly with dust that its wearer might have been taken out and beaten, like a mat, with advantage.

She was kindness and cordiality itself, looked very graceful, and presented me with a huge piece of cake; explained how little Barbara had rolled down stairs and cut her head open, but added that "Mary strapped it up at once," and "she hoped it would not signify." She said she was rather troubled about servants, as the housekeeper insisted upon leaving the evening after her (Mrs. Sternland's) return from Paris, and the housemaid followed her the next day; but, "upon the whole, she thought it was as well they had gone, because, of course, having been accustomed to do exactly as they chose, they naturally might have objected to take orders from a mistress."

She asked my aunt if she could recommend her a good cook, adding, somewhat plaintively, "Mr. Sternland is so particular about what he eats;" and, when my aunt said, very decidedly, that she could not recommend her a servant of any kind, entreated the canary "not to make such a noise," and observed that "it was almost impossible to hear a word while he was singing."

"If Mr. Sternland has not already found out his mistake he will before long," remarked my aunt, as she locked the caddy with an air of assured virtue.

Let "other people" leave caddies open or their keys about, if they pleased; she would set no such bad example!

My father, as was his wont, made no observation upon his sister-in-law's utterance. He listened to all she was pleased to state in Mrs. Sternland's disparagement, and then said,

"I suppose we can now have some tea, Mary?"

CHAPTER III.

Four years slipped away, and the discomfort which prevailed at The Chestnuts was a matter of public notoriety. Three children were added to Mr. Sternland's establishment, and, as may be imagined, their presence did not tend to make things much pleasanter.

Day by day the Venetian blinds became dingier and more crooked; day by day the white curtains grew more ragged and dirty; the amber curtains had been dyed crimson, and that colour also was fading out of them; whilst Mrs. Sternland's dress was, indeed, something to study.

Never by any chance did a visitor find her with her hair tidy or her attire even ordinarily neat. When she did not receive in a dressing-gown, a style of garment she particularly affected, she made her appearance in an old skirt, with a dilapidated bodice, the deficiencies of which were covered by a mantle or a shawl. At first callers used to imagine she was going out, and would apologise for detaining her; but ere long all Mrs. Sternland's acquaintances discovered it was "only

pretty Fanny's way," and discreetly refrained from allusions to her peculiarity.

As for Mr. Sternland, Fanny had found her master in will and more than her equal in selfishness. Let who would go bare, Mr. Sternland elected to be well clad. Let the dinner be cooked how it might, Mr. Sternland insisted that it should be of capital quality and well served; and, if not another soul in the house ever had clean linen, Mr. Sternland's shirts were still as immaculately white and his boots as faultlessly blacked as ever.

His study, too, was swept and garnished, and all his belongings—his books, his desk, his pens, his pencils, his microscope, his cabinets full of trumpery curiosities—were preserved intact, alike from the mischief of the children and the destructiveness of the servants.

In many respects, Mr. Sternland a few months after marriage relapsed into bachelorhood. He ate alone, sat alone, walked alone, and visited alone. So far as anyone in the house had any settled hours or habits, his hours and habits differed from them.

His own children he rarely saw, and Barbara wisely kept out of his way. At a remarkably early age she learnt that wherever Mr. Sternland might be was no place for her; indeed, it may be said there never was so utterly neglected and destitute a child as Lieutenant Gilderdale's daughter. Even the Arch-deacon was moved to speak to Mrs. Sternland on the subject; and the lady, who had arrived at a pass when she would have received money from anybody, gladly assented to the rev. gentleman's suggestion that he should make an appeal to Mrs. Gilderdale.

He had sufficient sense to post his letter from London, that the old Squire might not suspect whence it came, and his interference proved so successful that Mrs. Sternland was able the same week to appease a few clamorous creditors and buy a velvet jacket for herself. Barbara did not benefit beyond a pair of boots. When next the Archdeacon saw her she was as ragged, as dirty, as wild, and as saucy as ever.

A good man, he felt grieved, but not wholly discouraged.

"You really should send your little girl to school," he said to Mrs. Sternland. "She is younger than the Misses Wilton care to receive; but, if you like, I will ask them to stretch a point in her favour. She could not learn much, of course, at present, but it would keep her out of harm's way for some part of each day, at all events."

Once again Mrs. Sternland professed herself grateful for the Archdeacon's kindness, and once again his interference was efficacious.

Miss Daphne Wilton did for him what she would have done for no one else on earth—take a child of six as a day scholar; and thus it came about that every morning of her little life Barbara might have been seen running all alone down the High-street of Rowford as fast as her feet could carry her.

By this time nothing Mrs. Sternland could have done—unless, indeed, she had turned over a new leaf, had her windows cleaned, her carpets shaken, and her whole house purified—was capable of surprising Rowford. Things were accepted as matters of course since Mr. Sternland's marriage that a dozen years previously must have convulsed society. Astonishment felt itself stultified for lack of possibility of expression, and outraged decency took refuge in absolute silence.

Time had been when the spectacle of a child aged six, dressed out like a mountebank, the offspring of a gentleman, trotting off to school all alone might have caused comment and excited wonder. Now, however, when any staid inhabitant beheld an able-bodied infant out on its travels all by itself he, or she, merely thought, "It is only little Gilderdale," and there was an end of the matter.

Little Gilderdale—little gipsy—little waif! How I lament the time when the patter of your childish feet brought no joy to my heart, no colour to my cheek, I can never hope to tell! Always and ever it will come back with a feeling of bitter reproach that there were times when I hated Miss Barbara, when I wished her mother had been a hundred fathoms deep before she was born.

One morning, in honour of its being the anniversary of my own birth, a holiday had been granted to me, and I was proceeding at a leisurely pace down the High-street, when a little child sped past me. She had on an old hood, a brocaded frock made out of a silk that had no doubt been worn by Mr. Sternland's grandmother, a shawl tied round her as if she were a bundle and it a wrapper, a pair of stout shoes, and a black and a brown stocking.

"Late, as usual!"

Often I had heard one or other of my own schoolfellows make that remark as little Gilderdale scudded along the pavement; but, with a boy's usual indifference, I had never previously thought anything either about "little Gilderdale" or her want of punctuality; never, I can honestly say, had I from my eminence of thirteen years bestowed one moment's reflection upon Miss Barbara, who, fast as her small legs and large stock of wind could carry her, shot before me like an arrow, to make up those arrears of time which, poor darling, were none of her causing.

It was a detestable day—dull, gloomy, drizzling; over head the sky was a hateful grey; under foot the pavement was wet and muddy.

Nevertheless, little Gilderdale sped on, and I watched the tiny child hurrying away with the grudging sort of admiration a boy bestows upon every movement of a creature of the opposite sex. Not one of my schoolfellows could run like Miss Bab—a clean, swift run; something inherited both from mother and father—from the grace of the first and the energy of the last.

"THERE."

I said this word aloud and in capitals, for little Gilderdale was sprawling her short length on the dirty pavement. There came an access of mud or an inequality in the footpath, and in a moment she lay flat in the dirt, surprised, perhaps, but still silent—utterly silent.

"Hilloo!" I shouted, "I'm coming, don't stir;" but before I could reach her she was up and looking from under that old hood at the ruin she had wrought.

"Have you hurt yourself?" I asked. For answer she shut her eyes, trying not to cry, and said,

"I am very dirty."

At the age I had then attained chivalry is not largely developed; for which reason possibly, after surveying her quite dispassionately, I answered, doubtless with a view of combining truth and politeness,

"You do not look very clean."

Then she began to cry. "I can't go to school as I am," she whimpered.

"I don't think you can," I said, still feeling myself entirely an outsider, and as such capable of uttering unpleasant truths.

"And my slate is broke to pieces." I took up the slate with some interest, and found it was even as she stated.

"And it had all my sums."

"Can you do sums?" I inquired, looking at the small creature who spoke.

"Not many; only mult'plication, subtraction, and rule o' three."

In the days, little Barbara, so far and far ahead of us, when you had learnt to give even more than its full weight to each letter considered worthy of notice in our beautiful language, and to pronounce all your words properly, that day and that sentence have recurred to me over and over again.

I see the dull leaden sky, the almost deserted street, the respectable, gloomy houses, the signboard of the only hotel our town boasted swaying gently to and fro, a funny, whimsical-looking, forlorn child, and I hear distinctly, even at this present moment, the slight ring of defiance in your voice as you culminate the list of your arithmetical knowledge in "rule o' three."

It is curious to consider how often matters which subsequently prove of immense importance excite at the time they occur only the barest interest.

Assuredly I had no idea when I stood marvelling, half contemptuously, at young Gilderdale's proficiency in a study of which, at thirteen, I knew as little as boys usually do, into whose heads Greek and Latin have been flogged as well as hammered, that the day would ever come when a problem in "rule o' three" would be presented for my consideration that of myself I was never able to solve. All I thought at the time when Miss Barbara, the very picture of dirt and untidiness, first confided the conduct of her affairs into my hands was that I had not the faintest notion what to do with them or her.

A girl of any kind was a creature entirely outside my experience; how much more a little girl arrayed in shreds and patches—a cross between a beggar and a small performer at a show. Rigid neatness, thorough cleanliness, attention to all the rules and regulations of the society we affected at Rowford—to regard these dogmas as necessary to temporal salvation—was the faith in which I had been brought up; and yet here, by an accident, I was made, after a fashion, responsible for a muddy, untidy little baggage, who was neither kith nor kin of mine.

"I can't go to school," she repeated after that defiant crow concerning "rule o' three."

"No, indeed, you cannot," I remarked cheerfully, thinking she would be glad of the holiday. "You had better go home again."

"I daren't," said Miss Gilderdale, beginning to whimper, and rubbing her eyes with ungloved knuckles.

"Why?" I asked.

"'Cause pa's at home, and he'd be so—so cross."

"Your pa is Mr. Sternland, ain't he?" I asked, with that thirst for information to which servants and young people are alike unpleasantly subject.

"Yes. He ain't my own pa, you know, but he is the best I have got."

"And would he beat you?"

"P'raps. At any rate, if he scolded, ma would, with her slipper."

"With her slipper?" I repeated, in astonishment; for, with all my experience, I had never before heard of that instrument of punishment.

"Yes; they do come off so easy, and are always lying about."

"Lor!" said I. Brought up, as I had been, by a Maiden aunt, whose motto was "A place for everything and everything in its place," the suggestion even of a house where slippers were always "lying about" filled me with a not unpleasant amazement.

"I don't mind that much," went on Lieutenant Gilderdale's offspring, looking up at me, and presenting a besmeared face to view, "because it is just a tip or two and over; but he would go on for days and days about it. Still, as I'm too dirty to go to school, I s'pose I must go home."

And poor young Gilderdale looked up the street, and down the street, and into a cross lane that led to the sea; and, finding no help or inspiration come from the street, or the lane, or the sea, clutched her books, held out her hand for the slate, and, with a very woe-begone expression, faced right about.

"Will you come with me," I asked, my heart stirred with a pity quite foreign to my then nature; "we live, you know, next to The Chestnuts, nearer this way."

"I know, said the tiny creature," nodding her head—"Doctor Vanner's."

"And you have seen my Aunt Mary, the lady who wears the red and black silk dress on Sundays," I added, putting all our best points forward, as though I held a brief for our modest habitation, "Poplar Lodge."

"Yes; she gave me some lozengers and comforts once," explained Miss Gilderdale, with the unconscious retentiveness, and greediness, and frankness of her age.

"Very likely; she is fond of giving children lozengers and comforts," I said, with an emphasis on the words she had mispronounced—an emphasis entirely thrown away upon my companion.

"Will she be angry?" asked little Barbara, who had not at the moment a thought to spare for any abstract question of any kind.

"My aunt is never angry," I answered, bravely enough, though, indeed, I had serious misgivings as to how that relative might view the introduction into our modest household of Mrs. Sternland's unkempt, unwashed, untidy firstborn.

For the truth must be told—the Sternlands, in some vague, indescribable sort of way, held their heads higher than we did—"set themselves up," as dear Aunt Mary, in her rare moments of bitterness, said, "for county folk."

Whether they "set themselves up" or not, for some inscrutable reason the county folk did visit them—did, on rare occasions, request the "pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Sternland's company," &c.; whilst the county people, while receiving and inviting my father, the Rowford doctor, a man of considerable culture, to their wearisome repasts, ignored Aunt Mary, spite of her neatness and her red and black silk, and Aunt Mary felt sore at times accordingly.

"Where is my aunt?" I therefore, nervously enough, asked the trim housemaid who admitted myself and lady friend.

"Here," answered my aunt herself, emerging from the pantry; "what has brought you back already, you tiresome boy, hey? Wallace, how is this?" and she looked from me to my companion and from my companion back to me with an expression in which amazement and direful suspicion struggled together for mastery.

"Oh! aunt," I began, "little Gilderdale—I am sure I beg pardon, Miss Gilderdale—has met with an accident; and, as she did not wish to go home"—

"If you please, Ma'am," here interposed "little Gilderdale," in a beseeching tone, which, my aunt subsequently said, "went to her heart," "I felled and hurted myself—not much," she added, bravely; "and my slate is broke, and I am all mud, and"—Here my heroine broke down, and began to cry.

Why did I ever worry myself about what my aunt might do or say? Her sympathies were aroused in a moment.

"Felled and hurted herself, did she, a darlin'!" cried the worthy lady, who had often declared "she would give fifty pounds if one of us could be a girl"—the fifty pounds, I may observe, being as impossible a gift as the other benefit she desired—"and broke her slate, and is all mud!" Come to me, my precious! and tell me how it happened."



THE LAST VOYAGE. BY MASON JACKSON.



A QUIET CHRISTMAS. BY WILLIAM B. C. FYFE.

In another instant Miss Gilderdale was seated on my aunt's lap, and, scanned by my aunt's keen eyes, was telling her new friend her sorrow.

"And my slate, it was bought only last week; and my frock can never be made clean again."

"Yes, it can dear!" said Aunt Mary, cheerfully. "We will go up stairs together, and see what we shall see—eh? sweet! Jane, don't let those tarts burn! and Wallace, you go and tell Miss Daphne Wilton that Missy Gilderdale has had a fall, and cannot go to school for an hour or two. Now, come along, and tell me where you are 'hurted.'"

And, so saying, quite in a gleeful and juvenile manner, my aunt skipped up stairs hand in hand with Barbara; and the last I beheld of the pair ere I started on my errand to Miss Daphne were a flowing dressing-wrapper and a black and a brown stocking.

The dressing-gown or rather morning costume was worn by my aunt, it is perhaps scarcely necessary to state. At the time I accepted that style of apparel, as I did many other things, as a matter of pure and strict faith. It had not the smallest effect of being either loose or comfortable; on the contrary, it was a cumbersome article of attire, particularly about the shoulders, where pelerine after pelerine, bedizened by frills well and duly goffered, surmounted each other with the regular monotony of a coachman's cape. We must at Rowford have been at least five hundred years behind the prevailing fashion; indeed, as ill-natured people observed, when fashions were driven out of every other town in England they came to Rowford. Nevertheless, we had our rules, regulations, and ideas with regard to dress.

One of the Rowford ideas was that a woman who wore the dressing-wrapper my aunt affected—well washed, well starched, and well ironed, joined up the front, and put on like a night-dress—must be a good manager.

My aunt was a notable housekeeper. For her gifts in that respect, though, perhaps, not for her beauty, King Solomon might have chosen the dear lady as one of those wives of whom he had always so very many too many.

CHAPTER IV.

Next Sunday, as we were coming out of church, Mrs. Sternland stopped my aunt to thank her for her "great kindness to my little girl."

In lieu of the long discarded velvet, her dress was a cashmere of the colour of port wine, while gathered about her graceful figure she wore a shepherd's grey plaid shawl. In her easy simplicity of attire she looked beside my aunt like a duchess, and when she held out her hand and, with a charming smile, thanked me also for taking such chivalrous care of Barbara, I confess I decided that Miss Gilderdale's story of the slipper was utterly false, and she herself—well, in my nervous schoolboy language, I mentally employed a very plain phrase indeed.

But Aunt Mary was not to be deceived by any sayings or doings of Mrs. Sternland.

"I wonder," she said, clutching her umbrella with great determination and marching along to the sound of her own comforting words, "that woman was not ashamed to speak about her 'little girl.' I am sure no beggar in the streets was ever more ragged and tattered and dirty than that poor innocent. But, mark my words, she did not like it. Let her be what she will, she must have felt some touch of shame at the thought of my having seen the shreds and makeshifts under the child's frock. If Mr. Sternland beat her, I, for one, should say she richly deserved it. Still madam did not like it."

Apparently Madam did not like it, for a sort of coolness soon grew up between The Chestnuts and Poplar Lodge. When Mrs. Sternland met my aunt she was more cordial, gracious, and charming than can well be imagined; but she very rarely called at our house, and when Aunt Mary called at hers she was usually "not at home."

Most devoutly I could have wished that Barbara had imitated her mother's example in keeping out of our way, but she did nothing of the kind. From the hour—unlucky, indeed, I considered it—that I conducted Miss Gilderdale to Poplar Lodge the young lady became the plague of my life. Wherever I went, if the child could follow me she did, with a devotion and persistency which exposed me to the ridicule of my schoolfellows and the jeers of the street boys.

She came after me—at a long and discreet distance, indeed; but she did come after me; happy if allowed to do so in peace, instead of being saluted with the usual "Go home, Bab," "You must run away," "Your papa is looking for you," "I shall tell your mamma if you do not go back at once."

Sometimes I used to try to bribe the little creature to leave me in peace, give her an apple, share of an orange, or a brandy ball, to induce her to spare me the knowledge that somewhere round the corner, or behind the rocks, or a good way off along the beach, her poor little feet, cased as often as not in a pair of her mother's old boots, were waiting to bring her swiftly up to me at the first convenient opportunity.

"Here come Vanner and his shadow!" would yell out my schoolfellows when I made my appearance followed afar off by my double.

"Here's the cuckoo and its titling!" gleefully shouted the idle lads of the town, as, with trousers tucked up to their knees, they disported themselves on Saturday afternoons, wading in the sea which lapped the sands at Rowford.

In those days Miss Gilderdale's attentions proved rather trying. Well, we all live and learn. I did, at any rate. There came a time when I would have given all I had, all the poor all, I ever hoped to have, for one "more especial" smile from my former admirer Barbara. I wish now—oh, how I wish!—that in those dear old days my best feeling towards Barbara had not been that of grudging tolerance. But wishes cannot alter facts, and I ought to confess there were moments when I hated little Gilderdale—when, in the wickedness of my heart, I wished with every pulse in it she was dead.

And yet I liked the child. There were times, when I was quite alone with her, be it understood, and away from my schoolfellows and the gamins of the seashore, times that I felt quite fond of her when I missed little Gilderdale if domestic supervision compelled her to conform to the unities and fall to run the risk of breaking her neck by walking along the coping of the wall which divided the grounds of The Chestnuts from that of Poplar Lodge—from the apple-tree which presented an easy ladder of ascent at the side of the premises occupied by her step-father to the pear-tree a hundred yards distant, that afforded a convenient means of descent into our more humble demesne.

Oh, Bab! oh, dear, dear, little Bab! If I cover my eyes for a moment how clearly I can see, in the sharp light of remembrance, your little agile figure bending and swaying, swaying and bending, the while, in boots or shoes miles and miles too big for your tiny feet, you traversed the long length of that perilous ledge.

And then with what a ripple of delighted laughter you greeted me when I held up my arms to break that last leap from the lowermost branch! How happy you used to look when I had a smile and a word of welcome instead of my usual ill-conditioned, "Well, and what do you want?"

My heart aches many a time to remember how much happier I might have made your small life, how often I brought the tears to your eyes, how frequently I have sent you away downcast and sorrowful, how thoroughly selfish I was over and over again to you—poor, ill-treated, neglected, cheerful, buoyant, active little waif.

I never saw so active and lissom a child. I never, even amongst my schoolfellows, met such a restless, untiring, tiny demon of mischief.

Not the highest tree was too high for her to climb, not the widest jump was too wide for her to essay. I have watched her come down a thirty-foot ladder under-hand, and beheld her hold on one rope of a swing (the other being broken), like a sailor, till assistance could be rendered.

Her hands picked the potatoes out of the bonfires for our delectation; and she would fill her pinafore full of blackberries for my especial eating. And yet I was cruel to her over and over again. Ah, well! Miss Gilderdale, you had your revenge.

Time went on, and Miss Bab was eight, when one Sunday she appeared in church in a wonderful circular mantle which filled Rowford with amazement. We boys were rather impressed with the magnificence of her appearance, and nudged each other to look at little Gilderdale coming up the aisle clad in a scarlet-coloured outer garment trimmed with black velvet.

In our church we had never previously beheld such an apparition; and Barbara was evidently so delighted with the effect her appearance produced that at judicious intervals in the service we were all able to see the sly glances she cast upon her own splendour.

Poor Bab!—to whom finery came so rarely! Poor, dear Bab!—to whose first triumph in the way of dress I gave a most crushing blow!

"Did you see Barbara?" I, all admiration and astonishment, asked my aunt the while we walked demurely home after Divine service.

"Did I not?" said Aunt Mary, defiantly. "I wonder Mrs. Sternland is not ashamed to dress the child out in bed furniture. Why, it will be the talk of the town that little Gilderdale came to church pranked out in red moreen and cotton velvet."

That same afternoon Barbara, hanging about our gate on the chance of catching me as I went out, came up to Hubert and myself, and, with face wreathed in smiles, and a glow of perfect satisfaction illuminating her features, held out a corner of her mantle and said, "Do you like it?"

"No, I don't!" I answered rudely. "I hate the thing! I wonder your mamma lets you wear it."

In a moment the corner of her mantle dropped, her eyes filled with tears, and she was turning away, when Hubert said, "Never mind, Poppy, I like it. I thought you looked beautiful in church. Come for a walk. We will go down on the beach and gather some shells."

She tried to smile as she answered "No, thank you!" but the attempt was more pitiful than tears. It was so pitiful that it touched even me, the hardness of whose heart in those days resembled the nether millstone.

"Come along!" I cried; "and if the tide is far enough out I may be able to find you a piece of alabaster."

But Barbara refused to be comforted. She said, once again, "No, thank you, Wallace;" and, with arms hanging listlessly by her side and her head bent down, went slowly along the muddy side path, home.

Hubert limped after her; but it was my approval the child wanted, and not his. Though his artist's eyes loved the bit of bright colour, and regarded not the moreen and the cotton velvet, that was nothing to Barbara.

The next time I beheld that mantle it looked as if it had been dragged through every pool in the parish.

But Miss Gilderdale had to wear out the obnoxious garment all the same; and not a schoolboy in the town failed to greet her as "Poppy" when she appeared in sight. For, indeed, even in its dragged condition, Barbara's "bed hangings" proved terribly conspicuous. Far as one could see, little Gilderdale was plainly visible—little Gilderdale, with her poor shoes, her shabby frock, her old bonnet, and her scarlet mantle, hurrying along, always late, to school!

CHAPTER V.

Half holiday on a blazing afternoon in August. My brothers were all out; but I, having refused to accompany them, sat alone in our dining-room trying to read. Never before had any afternoon seemed so hot, never before had hours seemed so long. I was wearied of being by myself, and yet I had not energy to seek companionship.

When I rose in the morning my head felt heavy as lead. I could not eat any breakfast. I had no appetite for dinner. I longed for draughts of cold water; and, as Aunt Mary had the usual prejudice against the consumption of that beverage, I was obliged to go into the stable-yard and slake my thirst at the pump. My book seemed stupid, the room close; the garden was full of flies. I was wishing I was in some cool, mountainous country, where I could lie on the grass near a dripping well and let the water trickle into my mouth, when a noise outside the window attracted me; and, turning my head, I beheld Barbara Gilderdale swinging herself by her elbows on the sill.

"Wallace," she said, in that whisper which I knew so well meant mischief, "they are all out. Come and have some mulberries."

I may as well state frankly that Mr. Sternland's garden was one of those things concerning which we boys had no conscience. Many a raid did we make into it when the owner was dining at some grand house or sleeping tranquilly in the early morning. Of fruit he himself entertained as great an abhorrence as my aunt of cold water; his children were supposed not to eat any either; and the consequence was that there was always a liberal supply to meet our not infrequent demands.

As for Barbara, if fruit could have killed, she must have been dead years previously.

I have seen her take her lap full of apples, pears, and plums up into an unused hayloft, and finish the lot at a single sitting. Indeed, in our time we have all taken plentiful supplies up into that hiding-place and eaten them in solemn silence.

Mulberries, however, are not easy of carriage, and it was rarely we got a chance of having a sufficiency of those luscious berries; for which reason I at once rose with alacrity, and prepared to follow Miss Gilderdale to the grass-plot where that mulberry-tree grew.

"Poppy," said I, "you must take care not to make yourself in a mess. You remember how you got dyed last year."

"I will take care," answered Poppy, and accordingly, before she was five minutes older, face and hands and pinafore were all a fine purplish red.

"Won't you catch it?" I remarked, with that cheerful candour which characterises the unpleasant utterances of early youth.

"No," said Poppy, "they won't be home for ever so long, and I can wash my pinafore and dry it in the sun;" which in due time she did accordingly, having induced me to bring her a piece of soap out of my own bed-room.

By this time it was getting well on in the afternoon, but Poppy never knew what the feeling meant of being weary of mischief, and, looking out for some fresh iniquity which she could perpetrate, her eyes fell on the great walnut-tree which shaded the bay window of Mr. Sternland's especial sanctum.

"Oh! do let us get some walnuts," she cried, clasping her hands and looking up with as much eagerness as though the forbidden fruit itself had hung on the branches.

"Never mind them to-day," I entreated. "It is too hot to climb, and, besides, I feel as tired as a dog."

"I am not tired," she said, and went up the tree like a squirrel. But she found she was not strong enough to shake the nuts down, and accordingly slid to the ground again.

"I will get a stick," she explained.

"I wish you would not bother about those things," I remarked, merely as a wish, however, for I knew enough of Miss Gilderdale to be aware that when once she took a notion into her head nothing but the sight of Mr. Sternland or her mother could induce her to abandon it.

"I remember where there is a good stick," was all her answer as she ran off, reappearing, in a couple of minutes, with a most formidable hedge stake, which she was clearly unable to manage.

"If you take my advice, Poppy," said I, "you will let those walnuts alone."

But when did Poppy ever take advice? She had made up her mind she would try to get the fruit down, and there was an end of the matter. I strolled back to the mulberries, and left little Gilderdale to be worsted in her struggle with the walnut-tree.

I knew she would be worsted, but I was not prepared to see her fly down the garden, her hair floating behind her as she ran, her face looking as if on fire, sobbing as though her very heart would break.

"He will kill me," she cried out as she passed me; "I know he will."

I tried to stop her, but failed ignominiously in the attempt. "What is the matter? What has happened? Where are you going?" I shouted.

"To hide," she answered, "in Bailey's wheat-field; don't tell anybody, I will never come home again."

As I was pretty sure to be able to find her, I thought I would go back to the walnut-tree and see what really had happened; but before I was half way to the spot I heard Mr. Sternland's voice raised in such an extremity of passion that I decided to put the wall between myself and him, and an idea even crossed my mind that I might do worse than follow Barbara's example, and take refuge among Bailey's sheaves till the storm had blown over.

Before, however, I could make good my escape, Mr. Sternland was out in the garden and had caught sight of me.

"Come down here, you young scoundrel!" he said, spluttering with passion. "What have you been doing in my garden?"

"I came over to get some mulberries, Sir," I answered, making a virtue of necessity, and addressing him from the top of the wall.

"To steal some mulberries, you mean; and, not content with that, you must damage my walnut-tree and smash my microscope to pieces. But you shall pay for it, Sir! Come down this minute, and let us hear what your father has to say about your afternoon's work."

I obeyed him—in fact, I was too horror-stricken to do anything else; and, his hand twisted in the collar of my jacket, he marched me down the drive and out of the gates of The Chestnuts, and so along the side path, till we reached Poplar Lodge, where my father—hot, dusty, and out of temper—was just getting off his horse.

At sight of Mr. Sternland and his own firstborn he stood amazed.

"I have brought your precious son, Dr. Vanner, for you to deal with as you think fit, and to tell you I shall hold you responsible for the damage he has done. Fifty pounds won't cover it. I'll put a stop to his trespassing on my grounds. The next time I catch him in my garden he shall go to jail, neighbour or no neighbour."

"Will you tell me what he has done?" said my father, looking more angry than I had ever seen him before.

"Done! He has smashed my microscope to pieces. I don't believe it can ever be put together again. Like his confounded impudence, he came in broad daylight to steal my walnuts, and threw a stake like a club through my study window. I was just in time to see him going over the wall, or, I suppose, I might have whistled for compensation."

"What have you to say to all this, Wallace?" asked my father, rising to a white heat under the insolence of Mr. Sternland's manner rather than the impertinence of his words.

I hesitated for a moment. With Barbara, I believed her step-father would kill her if he knew that she was the culprit; but still, I could not let my father be held responsible for such damages as Mr. Sternland evidently intended to exact. I thought I would try a middle course, and clear myself while screening Barbara. Evidently she had not been seen and was not suspected.

"Why do you not answer," said my father, irritably.

"Answer," interposed Mr. Sternland, "what can he answer? The walnut-tree and the microscope speak for themselves, and he was good enough himself to state that he had begun with the mulberries."

"So I did," I said doggedly; "but I touched nothing else. I never touched a walnut, and if Mr. Sternland's microscope is broken it was not broken by me."

"Do you hear that, Sir," cried Mr. Sternland, addressing my father. "The unmitigated young ruffian tries to throw a doubt on my word. Come, Dr. Vanner, and satisfy yourself. I insist upon your doing so."

"I am quite satisfied the microscope is broken," said my father. "The question now is, who broke it. Did you, Wallace?"

"No, Sir."

"Who did, then? It was not broken without hands, I suppose."

"I did not see it broken. I did not know it was broken until Mr. Sternland told me so."

"Come—come," said my father, "don't let us have any beating about the bush. You either broke the thing yourself or you know who did break it. You were not in the garden alone, we may conclude."

"No, Sir."

"These half-holidays are the plague of my life," observed Mr. Sternland. "I shall go down to the head master and ask him to stop them altogether."

"Which, of course, he will do at once," said my father ironically. There had never been a cordial understanding between him and Mr. Sternland. "Now, Wallace, who was with you in this affair?"

"I cannot tell you, Sir."

"But, my good fellow, you must tell me. It is not a question of your will, but of mine."

"I will never tell," said I. He was getting hot, but I was getting hotter.

"Do you dare to say that to me, Wallace?"

"Yes, Sir."

I saw his hand tighten on his riding-whip and his lips compress.

"For the last time, will you give me the name of the person who was with you in Mr. Sternland's garden?"

"I am not an informer, Sir."

I know not what demon prompted me to make such an answer. It was the first time in my life I ever answered my father impertinently, and he gave me cause to remember it.

Thick as hail came the blows over my back and shoulders. He thrashed me till his whip broke, and then bade me go to my room and stay there. "As for damages, Mr. Sternland," I heard him say, as I slunk off to do his bidding, "we will discuss that question when you pay me for eight years' attendance on your family, for which I have never received even common civility."

As I went up stairs I felt more certainly than ever that I hated Barbara Gilderdale.

What had the child not made me endure—the jeers of the street Arabs, the ridicule of my companions. She had spoiled most of my holidays, and been the occasion of many a quarrel between me and Hubert, whom I loved with a love passing that of boy for boy. Lastly, she had caused me to be impertinent to my father and my father to be unjust to me. I did not care much about the thrashing, but, as I closed my door and threw myself across the bed, my heart was bitter against Barbara, and Mr. and Mrs. Sternland, and all the little Sternlands.

"It would serve the little monkey right if Mr. Sternland did find out it was all her work," I thought, and then there recurred to me a vision of the child in her mad fright fleeing from retribution in the shape of an outraged step-father, and I longed to go out into Bailey's wheat-field and tell her she might go home without apprehension, for that I would never betray her.

At the same time, however, I wished, with every vein in my heart, that little Gilderdale lived on one side of the Channel and I on the other.

Presently up came Aunt Mary to speak some words of reproof and consolation.

"You should not have vexed your papa, Wallace, when you know how much he has to try him; I am sure there is no one in the parish less able to afford such an expense as replacing that microscope will be. Just whisper who was with you in my ear, and then come down stairs and be comfortable again. Tea is ready and—"

But at this juncture I interrupted her kindly babble.

"Oh! aunt," said I, "do please leave me alone, I am so tired, and so sick, I want to go to sleep."

"I hope you will wake in a better temper," she remarked severely; but after that she relented, and turned back and kissed me, and drew down the blind, and went out, closing the door softly behind her.

I had slept, I suppose, for a couple of hours, heavily, dreamlessly, when I was awakened by several people entering my room. Sitting up, and wearily rubbing my heavy eyes, I saw my father, followed by Aunt Mary leading little Gilderdale, a piteous object, while the background was well filled in by all my brothers and a couple of servants.

"Wallace," said my father, "I have come to say I am very sorry, my boy. Had I suspected you were trying to screen this poor child I would not have flogged you for ten times fifty pounds."

"Who told them, Poppy?" I asked; "I never would."

"She told them her own self," said Aunt Mary, with an air of approval and personal possession. "When she heard from Hubert what had happened here, she went straight in and said it was all her doing. And look, Wallace!" and my aunt lifted the poor little arms, all bruised and swelled, and showed me her neck red and inflamed with the cruel blows which had been dealt her.

Then my soul seemed to go out to the child. "Oh, Poppy!" I cried, "I would not this had happened to you for anything in the world."

It was the first time in my life I had ever spoken really kindly to her, and at my words she came nestling to me. With her head on my breast she sobbed out all her trouble—wept and sobbed herself to sleep—and then Aunt Mary took her.

"She is going to stay here for awhile," remarked my father. "Mrs. Sternland has begged us to keep her out of her step-father's sight."

CHAPTER VI.

Many weeks passed before I was able to leave my room. The weariness, and heaviness, and lassitude I had been unable to analyse or understand were the premonitory symptoms of a fever which fastened upon me with a violence that at one time seemed to set all medical skill at defiance; but at last the worst was over: I was pronounced out of danger, and then began the trying ordeal of convalescence.

All through it little Gilderdale was my companion. My aunt could not have kept her away even had I wished it; but in truth I did not wish her absent. Her love and fidelity had touched me at last, and I grew fond of the child as though she were my sister. She lived now at our house more than she did at her own home, and Aunt Mary delighted in initiating her into the mysteries of tidiness and cleanliness, and a few other things of the same kind, which she would certainly never have learnt much about at The Chestnuts.

There matters were, in a good muddling fashion, proceeding steadily from bad to worse. Twice already Mr. Sternland had been obliged to sell some portion of his property in order to satisfy his creditors; and it seemed probable that, before many years were over, he would—unless he bestirred him and looked out for some employment—have to repeat the process so often as to leave no property to sell.

Had not old Mrs. Gilderdale paid for Barbara's education, that young lady would probably have gone on to years of discretion ignorant of all accomplishments, except, perhaps, "rule o' three."

As it was, the Squire being dead, Mrs. Gilderdale, though much under the dominion of her eldest son's wife, did pay the bills which Miss Daphne Wilton sent to her each half year, "with the Misses Wiltons' compliments."

So, what with practising and learning her lessons and writing exercises, little Gilderdale's time was pretty fully occupied, and she had less leisure than formerly to follow me about, as was at one period her pleasant wont.

Still she was with us a great deal, and came to be regarded as so much one of ourselves that the common boys wearied of jeering me about her; while from the time of the microscope adventure there grew up a feeling of liking and pity for her amongst my schoolfellows.

It was decided that "Poppy was not half a bad fellow," and when Valentine's Day came round so many funny little notes were thrust into the letter-box at The Chestnuts for Miss Gilderdale that Mr. Sternland first inquired if Rowford imagined his house was the post office, and then solemnly committed all the epistles to the flames.

After that, those who wished to evince a friendly feeling to

Poppy adopted the simple plan of giving their valentines to her themselves.

So time went on, quietly and uneventfully. Old years died, and new years were born; and at last Barbara was sixteen. I was twenty-three. I had left college and was trying to make my way at the Bar, not very successfully; but still I looked on Rowford as my home, and spent a considerable part of every summer and autumn at Poplar Lodge.

As for the rest of us, Hubert had decided to be an artist, and meant, "when he could afford it," to go to Rome. Percy's bent seemed to be that of "ne'er do well," and already he was adding wrinkles to my father's forehead. Harry had gone to sea; and for the two youngest—one said he would be a clergyman, and the other a doctor. Percy had been articled to a local solicitor, and was getting on as badly as a young man could.

Life, then, had pretty well begun for us all in earnest, and yet not one of us felt as if he had really left the nest. As I have said, Rowford was still home to me; and I think that even Percy would have missed the familiar roof-tree had it ceased to shelter him. So far, nothing in our lives had occurred to make any of us very sad or very serious; and yet when I came down for the long vacation I was conscious of a certain undefinable change that had taken place in Hubert. Always tender and thoughtful, he was more tender and thoughtful than formerly; always a little pensive, he fell oftener into fits of musing.

He was more devoted to his art than ever, and I could not but notice on the walls of his studio, as we laughingly called the attic where he spent so many solitary hours, how often the face of little Gilderdale appeared.

She seemed to have been his only feminine model. Not even Aunt Mary figured, save as a portrait, in that gallery of art.

It was always Barbara: now the little waif I first remembered, then in the scarlet mantle, anon peeping round a rock, again looking seaward, with her hand shading a pair of wistful, eager eyes.

Always Barbara. I looked around, and she smiled at me from the canvas, glanced saucily up, as I had seen her do so often—was "Little Bab," "Poppy," a child on the seashore, Barbara in disgrace, Barbara and her kitten, Barbara in the wheat-field (he had guessed and sought her there), Barbara's first dancing-lesson. Ah! well, and well-a-day! I was so ignorant, even at twenty-three, of my own heart and his that all this told me nothing. Honestly, I can say I had no more thought of loving little Gilderdale when I came down to Rowford than I had of committing suicide. And yet, unknown to myself, I loved her better than my own life.

I found it out in a moment. We had gone for a sail in a ridiculous craft, scarcely at the best seaworthy, in which for no consideration would I now peril any life, but which I then thought quite good enough to carry Barbara, the brother I best loved, and myself.

I suppose it was because we had escaped danger so often that we had all come to think little of it. However this may be, I know we laughed at the warnings of an old sailor who saw us embark, and advised us to take some more competent "hand" with us.

"Why," said I, "my brother and I have been out in every sort of weather."

"Ay," was the significant reply, "but perhaps in such weather as you are like to have you never carried so precious a freight."

I saw Hubert turn first red then white as these words were spoken; then he said,

"Perhaps we had better take some one with us."

"Absurd, and the sea like a millpond," I answered; and so we shoved off.

The first part of our voyage was fair as fair could be. There was just wind enough to make sailing pleasant, just sun enough to let us know summer had not wholly departed.

"Do you like it, Barbara?" said my brother at last (I noticed he never now called her Poppy).

"I love it," she said, and gleefully laved her hands in the water.

"I think, Barbara, you can steer," observed Hubert, an hour or two subsequently. "Wallace, you had better spend your strength here."

The tempest was upon us. The heavens were opened, and the wind and the hail bore down upon our frail bark as if determined to engulf it.

"See to the sail, Wallace. Good Heavens!"—but he spoke too late. With a crash, mast and sail went overboard, and for a few seconds it seemed problematical whether we should not all go overboard together.

A single moment of panic would have cost the trio their lives; but there was not a nervous person on board; and so, having cut away all we could, we righted eventually, and took to the oars.

"I am afraid Barbara will be wet through and through," remarked my brother, as he struggled in a rough sea with a couple of oars. "Put my coat about her," and he began to unfasten it.

In a second I had my coat off, and was wrapping it about her. What a fool I was. What a fool I had always been.

"Barbara," I said, as I held the sleeves open for her to slip her arms into, "are you terribly afraid?"

"No; not in the least," said the brave face and the frank voice in answer. "I wish you were safe. As for me, I can but be drowned."

"Never," I declared, "never while I live." And then, as I wrapped my jacket closer round her, I know I drew her nearer to me and kissed her over and over again.

"Don't, oh! don't, please," she whispered, glancing towards Hubert; who, with head turned steadfastly towards the bows, refused to take cognisance either of her or me.

"You had better help pull now, Wallace," he said, hoarsely, when he spoke again; and, without a word in answer, I took to my oars and rowed as he only who has his whole freight on board can ever row.

But for all our efforts I fear we should not have made land had it not been for a collier, who, perceiving our distress, proffered assistance.

"Yo, ho!" they shouted.

"Yo, ho!" we replied; and so they tacked, and tacked, and tacked again to our assistance, and threw out a towing-rope, when Hubert's strength and mine were almost exhausted.

"Nearly done for, mates," a voice shouted out, sympathetically, as the hands pertaining to it made fast.

"Pretty nigh," answered Hubert, cheerfully—that sort of language being always nearer the end of his tongue than of mine.

"Wouldn't the young o'man like to come aboard?"

"No, thank you," said the "young o'man," answering for herself. "I am very well where I am."

And so, through foaming billows and against contrary winds, we somehow, after hours, compassed Rowford and safety.

She was young, my ladylove, and very simple; yet, in the very simplicity of her nature, she endeared herself to me as she could not have done out of her wisdom, by merely, as she

turned one wistful glance on me, placing her hand in that of Hubert, and so trotting with him right bravely to our gate, where she paused and hesitated.

"I thank you, Barbara," he said, stopping also, and lifting her hand, all wet with sea-water, to his lips; "I thank you, and pray God may bless you both. Wallace will see you home."

"Not to-night!" she exclaimed. "Oh! not to-night;" and, more swiftly than ever her childish steps had carried her, she sped straight away to The Chestnuts.

So we became engaged; so we grew into lovers. We asked for no consents, we looked for no countenance from our elders. Proverbially, love is foolish. The deity which presided over our "fond fooling" was, I fear, a very simpleton.

For six months—nay, for longer—we were as enormously happy as the consciousness of our own bliss, damped by the spectacle of poor Hubert's wretchedness, could make us.

"My boy," said my father, "I see it all. Don't be greater idiots than you can help."

"You must remember Bab has no father, and be careful of her," observed my aunt.

I like, my dear, to look back upon that time and think how innocent we were, how little worldly, how careless about the future, how sufficient for us the happy present, with its walks and talks, its words of spoken endearment, and its letters full of repeated folly, neither of us wearied of writing and reading. When I think of those days, Barbara, and remember what came after, I realise just all it is that years and experience can take from one in the way of freshness, and trust, and hope.

And we did not abide long enough in our fool's paradise to weary of it, did we, love? How well I remember the day we were turned out of it—the day I lost the Barbara of that happy time as completely as the child "all tattered and torn," to whom I was sometimes, often indeed, much less than kind.

The eviction occurred on Christmas Eve. It is almost needless to state it was accomplished by the mouth of Mr. Sternland.

We were all very merry at Poplar Lodge when he knocked at the door and asked for Mr. Wallace. A presentiment of evil crossed my heart as I repeated my own name after the servant who uttered it.

He had refused to walk up stairs, and stood in the hall, where I went to him.

"You wanted to see me?" I said, interrogatively.

"Yes, for a moment—only for a moment."

There was a look in his face I could not understand, and which I did not like; but I opened the door of my father's room and asked him to enter.

Then he plunged into his subject.

"I am given to understand," he began, "that there has been some love-making between you and Miss Gilderdale."

"Well, if there has?" I answered, defiantly.

"There must be an end of it," he went on. "Such fooling does much harm, and you could never be a fit husband for my step-daughter."

"Do you mean in a worldly sense?" I asked.

"I mean in every sense," he replied; "but more particularly, as you suggest, in a worldly sense."

"Oh!" said I, feeling that here I could meet him on even ground. "I know I have no private fortune, and that I have not made much way in my profession as yet. Still, my prospects are good, and your step-daughter is very young, and we are both willing to wait until I can afford to marry."

"Have matters proceeded so far as that?" he remarked, with a sneering chuckle. "Indeed, it is high time I interfered. Miss Gilderdale can never become the wife of Mr. Wallace Vanner."

"Why not?" I put the question defiantly; for the insolence of his tone would have stirred the blood of any one born of woman.

"Because she is a great heiress."

"Barbara an heiress?" I repeated, incredulously.

"Yes. All the descendants of the old Squire are dead, and all the estates must come to her. Did you not know this?"

I am quite satisfied he had not known it ten minutes previously himself. I am quite certain he had scarcely read the lawyer's letter through before he seized his hat and came to deal a death-blow to every hope of my life. For what he said proved to be true in all particulars.

Barbara was now the sole heiress of the Gilderdale property, and, such being the case, it could not be considered strange that her relations deemed it high time she should leave Rowford—and me.

And yet, through the years when she had nothing else to love, poor child, she had loved me! And I might, a month previously, have married her, and The Chestnuts would only have rejoiced to be rid of the burden, slight as it was, of her maintenance. And now—Cease, cease all murmuring, sad, despairing heart; for the world has taken your lady-love into its own keeping, and the days which have been almost too full of happiness can return no more!

CHAPTER VII.

Nearly five long years after that Christmas Eve when Barbara and I were separated, I sat alone in my chambers.

I had done fairly well in my profession; but the drains upon me were very heavy, and I was a far poorer man than when I became engaged to Barbara. I was older, too. I had worked hard; though I had achieved some success, I had experienced much disappointment, and as fast as I earned money I had to disburse it. At my father's death the whole care and charge of a large family fell upon my shoulders. We found him dead, just a week after Barbara left Rowford, with a letter, announcing Ruin, clutched in his hand.

Like many another who finds it somewhat difficult to make two unelastic ends meet, he had speculated, and with the ordinary result.

Everything was gone—even Poplar Lodge and the furniture it contained were retained with difficulty, and at considerable expense. But I thought I would try to keep the home for Aunt Mary and the boys; and I did so, though people said—and perhaps rightly—I was foolish for my pains. It may be that the boys would have done better had they been turned out into the world to fight for their living. But I could not cast them adrift; and thus it came to pass that for five years I had to feed and clothe them, pay their debts, try to push them on in their profession, without much help or gratitude, save from Hubert, who painted so incessantly that he destroyed his health, and sold his pictures for next to nothing in order to avoid being a burden upon me.

During all those years I had not heard a word of Barbara. The Gilderdales seemed to have taken her, body and soul, into their possession; and, for aught any of her old friends knew of her doings The Grange might have swallowed up her identity. She never wrote to anyone. Even Mrs. Sternland said she only heard of her through Mrs. Gilderdale and the family solicitor. Perhaps the once fair Fanny had only herself to thank for her daughter's neglect, for no sooner did she realise the fact of Barbara being an heiress than she commenced a system of begging letters which drew down upon her the remonstrances of Mrs. Gilderdale, the animadversion of Mrs. John Gilderdale, and a statement of Miss Gilderdale's



"'Twas Merry in the Hall!" BY SIR JOHN GILBERT, R.A.



ENGAGED. BY ARTHUR HOPKINS.

financial position from the family solicitor, who went on to say that, so long as Mrs. Sternland abstained from applying to her daughter for advances quite out of the young lady's power to give, Mrs. Gilderdale would send fifty pounds each half year to Rowford, which sum she trusted would relieve Mrs. Sternland from pecuniary embarrassment.

"They might just as well talk of sending a hundred pence into a house like this," remarked Mr. Sternland; and, indeed, in Fanny's hands the one sum would have been about as much use as the other.

"But I wanted nothing from Barbara except a word now and then to show that she remembered me," said Aunt Mary, "and I think she need not have grudged writing it."

Barbara, however, never wrote to anyone; and, by a sort of tacit agreement, we ceased to speak of her. In the house where she had once been thought so much of her name was never uttered.

For me, I remembered her as I should had she died—without anger or bitterness. "She was so young," I said to my heart, "and hers was so hard a life that it is natural she should like to forget everyone and everything that was part and parcel of it; but still, my dear, you might have sent some greeting to my aunt; none of us would ever have presumed upon it."

Once, and once only, during the course of those five years, I thought perhaps Barbara had not forgotten me. It was when, on the Christmas after my father's death, there came to me a parcel containing a costly watch, with chain to match.

But there was not a word to indicate from whom the gift came. It was sent to me direct from the firm of jewellers whose address the box bore; and when, on my return to town, I made some inquiries on the subject, they told me the watch and chain had been ordered and paid for by a middle-aged lady, somewhat shabbily dressed, who "was very particular about the pattern of the chain, about the crest being accurately engraved, and the initials of your name, Sir."

Now this last statement puzzled me more than anything about the matter. I had always been called Wallace, and I doubted whether even my own aunt recollected I had been given the name of Edward also at my baptism. Barbara, I felt certain, had never heard me so addressed; and yet there were the letters, E. W. V., as clear as clear could be.

I put aside the present, for I did not care to wear the gift of an anonymous, though generous donor; and as time went by, and Barbara made no sign, even that imagining of her kindly recollection faded away—out of my life, just as she had done.

But I never forgot her; no matter where I was or what I was doing, Barbara had a place in my memory. She was as much part and parcel of my being as daylight and night. Time might take much from me—time had—but it could not destroy the remembrance of the years when we had been to each other as sister and brother, and of the happier months which followed, when we were so much nearer and dearer still.

Though she was always in my thoughts, there were seasons when she was especially so, and I had been thinking about her more than usual on that evening as I sat alone.

A letter dropped into the box roused me from my reverie about days which could never again return. The letter was from my aunt—opening it, behold the first words my eyes lighted on were "Barbara Gilderdale."

"She is coming to stay at The Chestnuts for a time, but I suppose we shall not see much of her," wrote Aunt Mary. That was all—but more than enough for me. Barbara at Rowford! Barbara at The Chestnuts! Then I must spend my Christmas holidays in town. I was not yet cured of my folly. Five years had not sufficed to wean my foolish heart from the girl I could never hope to marry.

Ere another fortnight my aunt wrote again:—

"Barbara, or Miss Gilderdale, as I suppose I ought now to call her, has come, and I have seen her."

"Rowford has gone mad about her, I believe. Wherever one goes one hears of nothing but her beauty, her cleverness, and her generosity. In the old days she might have been as beautiful as Venus and nobody would have thought of making a remark about it. As for generosity, well, I am given to understand she has been generous to some people, though she has certainly not been so to us. She brought for old Mrs. Bell a bog-oak jewel-casket—very handsome—and for the Archdeacon a gold snuffbox, and has given many expensive presents besides. I suppose, however, she thought we were too poor to waste her money on, for all she presented her 'dear Miss Wallace' with was a trumpery needle-book made of Tunbridge wood; and, with as much ceremony as though the thing had been worth ten thousand pounds, she begged Hubert's acceptance of an old engraving not worth twopence. Hubert laughs at his old boyish fancy for her, and says the 'Poppy' he and you loved was spirited away and changed into the 'beautiful Miss Gilderdale.' I don't think her even pretty; but she is quite the fashion. She is always out—walking, riding, skating, dancing, flirting. All the young men are crazy about her, and all the mothers are trying to secure her for a daughter-in-law. If she were a duchess she could not give herself greater airs. The only good thing she has done is to have The Chestnuts turned out of window. The house is clean now—a thing it has never been before since Mr. Sternland's marriage. She has installed a former governess as housekeeper, and means to allow her mother five hundred a year so long as she 'does not interfere, and keeps out of debt.'"

"Mrs. Sternland was in here the other day, and said that she thought it very hard she could not be mistress in her own house."

"I told her pretty plainly, putting some good manager in her place was the only sensible action I had heard of her daughter performing since she came back to Rowford."

"She is greatly changed," said Mrs. Sternland.

"And not for the better," said I, which speech she must have repeated; for Miss Gilderdale remarked to me, the other evening at the Archdeacon's, that I was determined not to flatter her.

"You will find plenty of people to do that at Rowford without me," I answered.

"Yes," she said, "and everywhere else;" at which all present laughed, as if she had made some witty speech.

"She has introduced a new game here. It is called 'Philopena'—a most senseless, forward sort of amusement, I consider; but all the young ladies are crazy about it, and, of course, all the young men. I will tell you what Philopena is in my next letter, but have not time to do so now."

In my aunt's next letter came the promised explanation.

"Philopena," she said, "is this: If a lady or gentleman get a double almond, he or she presents the half to anyone who may be selected, with the remark, 'Philopena!'"

"The next time donor and receiver meet whoever says 'Philopena' first expects a present. It may be a present of anything, from a purse up to a tea-service. Miss Gilderdale either is sharper than the gentlemen, or they pretend she is for the sake of making her gifts. At any rate, she is inundated with brooches, lockets, necklaces, bracelets, and all sorts of ornaments."

"I mean to open a jewellers' shop," she said to me the other day.

"You would make a profit at both ends in that case; for I suppose your admirers would buy from you," I replied.

"And then I could deliver the goods to myself at once," and she went away, laughing. What people can see in her to make such a fuss about I fail to imagine!

"She has never once asked after you, Wallace—never once. You will, I hope, alter your intention about not coming down at Christmas. If you felt afraid of meeting your old flame, you need labour under no apprehension on that score. You would not recognise her. Honestly, I can say, except her love of mischief and tormenting, she has not a single trait left of the little girl you brought home all covered with mud, holding a broken slate and wearing one black and one brown stocking."

I longed to see her, changed though she might be—altered though I knew she was. I craved for a sight of this new Barbara, who had taken the place of my Barbara of old. I could make allowances for her, though my aunt could not. I knew that older and wiser heads than her's might well have been turned by the sudden leap from poverty to wealth, from the position of a waif to that of an heiress. And if she really were so different from the girl who—perhaps in her ignorance—said she loved me, why my danger in meeting her would be all the less. Even if I forgot she was now Miss Gilderdale of The Grange, she would speedily refresh my memory.

So I went. I was poor, dull, weary, and despondent. The claims upon my purse had that autumn been heavier than ever. Hubert had been ill, and compelled to come to London for advice. Percy had "taken the loan" of some of his employer's money and was unable to replace it. My younger brothers, somehow, could not manage at the University to "maintain their position" without continually applying to me, and were both, as I found, deeply in debt besides. All things seemed against me; all things, indeed, were then against me; and, as I have said, in a very dispirited frame of mind I reached Rowford.

The very evening of my arrival Barbara happened to call at our house. She was going to a party, and looked in, as she passed, to deliver some trivial message, to which I paid no attention; for, as I looked at her, a greater love than ever entered my heart. She might be all my aunt said—a flirt, a heartless, selfish, unfeeling, ungrateful little wretch—but she was the world to me, nevertheless. Till then I had experienced a sorrowful rest—a contented resignation; but, when I met her again, I knew I should never feel resigned or at rest more.

Was she beautiful, you ask, my reader? and I answer—not, perhaps, in the strict sense of the word; but she seemed beautiful to me. There was something witching about her, something to which my poor heart fluttered, as a moth that has had its wings singed returns to the candle to die.

"What, you here!" she exclaimed, holding out her hand as frankly and as negligently as if we had been the merest acquaintances, parted only for a week. "Why, who would have thought of seeing you?"

"I usually spend Christmas at Rowford."

"Ah! You were always a wonderfully united family, I remember."

In sheer amazement I looked straight in her face—her piquant, sparkling face, which was, and yet was not, that of the Barbara I remembered.

For the first time she coloured, and an uneasy expression drifted across her countenance. It was natural she should feel a little embarrassed. After all, let a woman be as fickle as she will, she cannot be quite forgetful. Occasionally there must recur some faint memory of the time when a man loved her and when she either loved him in return, or thought she did.

No—never! Let my aunt say what she would, I could never be hard upon my darling; and yet I understood in that fleeting expression the sight of me pained her—simply, as I imagined, because she was obliged to remember the innocent, happy days when we were not more "foolish than we could help," and when I was as careful for her as her father could have been, because I loved her so dearly and so truly.

A poor, trumpery sort of lover I must have seemed that night in the eyes of our Rowford Cinderella, glass-slippeder and fairy-robed; but I had been an honest lover, and hoped still to remain her friend, for both of which reasons I was able—though my old sweetheart jibed, and jeered, and gave herself, on the strength of her heiress-ship, so many unaccustomed airs—to look at her, surprised it may be, but still without reproach.

"Shall I see you at Mrs. Bell's?" she asked, after she had transacted her small business with my aunt.

"I have but just arrived; but in any case, I doubt whether Mrs. Bell would remember such an unimportant individual as myself existed."

"Yes, I recollect. You always detested the trouble of society. Good-by; we shall meet again, I hope. You look tired. I really do think even Mrs. Bell might prove a relaxation. No? Of course, you know best. *Au revoir.*"

"A nasty, hateful, little flirt," said my aunt, carefully graduating the intense bitterness of her epithets, "is not she another person, Wallace?"

But I returned no answer. My dear! my dear! it was all too cruel for words.

I could have borne it better to see you return something resembling your former self, even if married to another, than to listen to the mocking tones of your voice, to hear the light, frivolous words which had no ring of truth about them.

You could not have been further from me. Had I followed the Barbara of old to her grave she could not have seemed so lost as I felt her to be, as I watched the carriage lamps go twinkling round into the High-street.

Yet, so foolish was I, that another hour found me pacing the seashore that stretched, grey and cold, in front of Bayview Terrace, where the windows of one house were all ablaze with light. I stood in the darkness and watched the figures of the dancers as they flitted to and fro. Out into the silence came the sound of gay music, and I remained and listened till I could bear the contrast no longer, and walked far and far away seaward, over the wet sands, away into the sorrowful night, where I could hear nothing save the sob, sob of the ebbing tide as it receded from the land.

Never since my father's death had so many invitations been accorded to me as during the weeks I was mad enough to spend that Christmas time at Rowford.

It was thought good fun, I fancy, to see me and my old flame in the same rooms; she mischievous and tormenting as of yore, but all unloving; I unable to resist going where she did, but resolutely refusing to swell the number of captives in her train. That she desired this I saw clearly. To her with all her suitors, I, who would not pay her a compliment, ask her to dance, rush forward to pick up her glove, was as the vineyard of Naboth to Ahab. She did not care how much she vexed me; she had not a thought for the man whose life was so bare of bud and promise, but she did long to claim me as another victim.

Just as in the old days she tried at any cost to conquer the obduracy of the walnut-tree, so now, when she was come to years of discretion, she set herself to make me her willing slave, to "drag me out of my shell," as I heard her one day express her desire.

"Poor fellow! and then you would do him to death, I suppose," said her companion, a young officer.

"Not quite; I am very merciful," she answered, with that jibing laugh I had learnt so utterly to detest.

The Lieutenant stroked his moustache doubtfully. From the conservatory where I stood I could see the gesture as distinctly as I had been able to hear their words. Only that very day my aunt told me of the magnificence of the present he had sent Miss Gilderdale in connection with a lost Philopena; and I fancied he was marvelling whether that sprat he could ill afford would suffice to catch her heiress-ship.

"I have had a note from Mrs. Gilderdale insisting upon my return to The Grange," she remarked, toying coquettishly with her fan.

Just then I found an opportunity of leaving my involuntary hiding-place, and heard no more. A little later in the evening, however, the Lieutenant passed me in the hall, on his way home.

One look in his face told me he had received his *congé*—that he had asked and been refused.

"Lost all!" I considered—"bait, and hook, and line. It is your turn to be 'poor fellow!' now. She has done you to death."

So far I had escaped the Philopena ordeal. Barbara did not seem to meet with many double almonds, and those that did come in her way she generously halved with men who seemed to have plenty of money at command. Other young ladies were not so considerate; but, then, there was a sliding scale in the matter of gifts. For instance, "In Memoriam" was received with rapture by little Miss Potter; while for Miss Gilderdale's pleasure as much as the whole annual income of a hard-worked curate was spent at the first intention.

But at last my turn came. I had been allowed to go scot-free for so long a time that I never imagined Miss Gilderdale would so far forget all sense of fitness as to present me with a twin almond. But she did—and at the Archdeacon's, too.

With her advent, shelled and blanched almonds had gone out of fashion at Rowford; and it was always the business of some attendant cavalier to crack an infinity of that fruit for the heiress.

"Why here is a double one!" said the gentleman who was performing that office for her on the evening in question.

"Really?" she asked; and she took up the fruit and examined it daintily. "Wallace," she went on addressing me, "here is a Philopena for you. I have not given you one before."

I went and took it out of her hands—those hands I had seen brown as a gipsy's, dyed purple with blackberry juice, covered with mud and dirt hunting for crabs on the shore.

"Thank you," I said; "I feel highly honoured." But as I spoke my heart stood still. What should I give her if I lost? What manner of present could my poor means compass that should not expose me to ridicule and derision? Oh! false, false Barbara! Oh! cruel, cruel love! And you knew—who better?—how hard a struggle life was for me then, how stern a battle I had been fighting for years, whilst there was no luxury your soul desired that it lacked.

But, my dear, even then I forgave you. I said, instinctively, not out of my reason, or because of any line of argument, but simply instinctively, as a mother at once tries to find excuses for a favourite child, "She is so young, she is so attractive, she knows nothing of the world, she cannot understand poverty, she does not realise how much she hurts me."

And I would not let Aunt Mary speak against her—no, although I knew, if nobody else did, what it would prove to me should Barbara, taking me at unawares, say "Philopena" first. I did not intend she should do so. I meant to be first in the field, if it were possible. I had no idea of giving her the victory, as I felt certain her tail of admiring sycophants must have done. And yet, when I remembered her quickness, her fertility of resource, her elf-like suddenness, how could I hope to steal a march on her, though I went about saying "Philopena" to myself, in season and out of it.

For two whole days I saw nothing of her. She had a cold, Mrs. Sternland, whom I met on the parade, her satin dress sweeping the pavement, informed me. Sunday came, and I watched if she passed to church; but, no. Clearly Barbara must be worse. I would not call at The Chestnuts to inquire concerning her; but I felt I must go to church, if only for the purpose of possibly hearing how she was.

Have not I said I was foolish? No lad in his teens was ever so completely infatuated as I with my scornful sweetheart.

That day the Order of Morning Prayer was for me interpolated with words and thoughts foreign to the service. Was she very ill, I wondered. Was she going to be seriously ill? When should I see her again? One comfort, she could not go out to any parties, and she would have no one to flirt with, unless, indeed, she exercised her arts on the doctor, who was not young, or interesting, or, indeed, single—a matter which, however, seemed to signify little to Barbara.

While the school-children were singing, I found myself falling into strange reveries about Barbara; while the Archdeacon was preaching one of the very worst sermons I ever heard delivered, even by him, while, with my outward ears, I heard him, still, inwardly, I was listening to some wearisome jingle about Barbara.

Honestly, I was never a man who went to church in order to think at his leisure over his own worldly concerns; but, on that especial Sunday, by the time the Archdeacon had arrived at thirdly, I had quite decided that Barbara would die, that on her death-bed she would send for me and say, though the old love had been a mistake, still she liked me and believed I would always think kindly of her. I knew I should not be asked to attend her funeral; but, in fancy, I saw myself a solitary mourner following afar off the stately procession from The Grange, and bribing the sexton to let me go down into the vault after all her other kin and friends had left her solitary. Truly, love is a very curious thing. It can make an unimaginative man conjure up all sorts of phantasies; and I am not ashamed to confess that when the Archdeacon finished his address, and we all rose to our feet, I saw him and the church, and the congregation, through a mist of tears which dimmed my eyes, though it did not fill them.

And then I went down on my knees and prayed with as much fervour as my nature contained that cruel Barbara—the little Bab—the little gipsy—the mortified little Poppy of long and long ago—should be spared, even if I never on this side the grave set eyes on her again.

Out of our pew rustled my aunt, who always gave her very best, even in the way of dress, plain enough assuredly, to her Maker. After her Hubert limped painfully, with a defiant air. Percy, aware of his own shortcomings and believing the mind of Rowford was concentrated on them, followed down the aisle. Last of all, I walked gingerly, mindful, even in the midst of my own trouble, of ladies' skirts.

Altogether, a family worse at ease with itself I fancy it would have been difficult to find.

Looking at the trio preceding me, I asked myself, forgetting Barbara for the moment, "What can be the matter with all of us. We have struck a vein of ill luck, I know; but still we have a home. I can provide money enough to meet all expenses. We have no sickness, we are in many respects not so badly off."

"Philopena," said a voice in my ear at this moment—a voice judiciously lowered, for we were still parading down the aisle—"Philopena."

Philopena, indeed! Nay, but rather Barbara, naughty, naughty Barbara, with no more of a cold than I had, her eyes sparkling, her dress perfect, her tones as clear as a bell.

"You thought to beat me, Sir," she said.

"I wish you joy of your victory, Madam," I answered, bitterly, and turned out of the church porch in a totally opposite direction to Poplar Lodge.

I did not go to evening service; of that the reader who has, I hope, followed my doings so far with some interest may be quite sure.

Instead, I went down to the seashore, and determined what I would do. I would leave Rowford. I would send Miss Barbara such a present as none of her suitors had ever before even dreamed of purchasing for her (I meant to get it on credit), and I would shake the dust her feet had trodden off my shoes, and work desperately to discharge the debt her vanity had compelled me to incur.

Then I went to bed and slept as I had not done for weeks previously, and awaking refreshed, packed up everything for a start on Tuesday morning. In our town certain rules and regulations obtained, and I was not a big enough personage to start off at half an hour's notice without incurring more in the way of comment than I cared to encounter.

But I was sedulous to avoid even the chance of a meeting with Barbara. Shall I confess it? As one evidence of meanness weans us more from one we love than a multitude of greater sins, so this act of want of ordinary consideration on Barbara's part pained me more than all the cruel treatment with which she had preceded it. She might have turned aside her chariot-wheels for a moment in order to spare, no, not her lover—I did not now use that word even to myself—but her friend, her faithful friend of the beautiful long ago.

And so the dream of even friendship was over, and I sat alone in our old-fashioned sitting-room, pretending to myself to read the paper, when the door was suddenly opened, and Miss Gilderdale, unannounced, entered the room.

"Don't disturb yourself, Mr. Vanner," she said, gliding round to an easy-chair—the easy-chair which had been my father's—and seating herself. "I have only come to speak to you about our 'Philopena.'"

"Surely there can be no necessity for us to speak about that," I answered. "I have lost and you won. Nothing, therefore, remains but for me to consider the best and most appropriate present I can give you."

When I finished she rose, and as she did so, I noticed she was dressed more plainly than I had seen her since the bright days departed. A long black silk skirt spread itself over the well-worn hearthrug, and around her shoulders she wore a scarlet cloak, which, somehow, reminded me of the red merino mantle I had despised in the time which could return no more—no more!

"Wallace," she began—and, as I looked at her in surprise, I could see her face was full at once of trouble and of mischief—"I am not so bad as I may have seemed. I knew you could not afford to shower down diamonds upon me, and yet I wanted to say Philopena to you first, because there is just one thing you have I covet."

"That I have?" I repeated, doubting the evidence of my senses, and I looked about the room in search of the particular trifle upon which her ladyship had set her young affections. What could it be her soul longed for? As well as I myself she was acquainted with each article I possessed; and I could not imagine—no, I could not—any one I owned that by possibility she could desire to take from me.

"Cannot you guess what it is I want?" she asked, and, yes, there was some timidity in her manner and a colour in her face, as if she desired the koh-i-noor, and believed I could get it for her.

"I cannot," I answered; and once again I looked round the room in search of something which would give me some clue to her wishes. "I own so few valuables of any kind, none worth your acceptance, even if I could part with them."

She laughed outright and knelt on the hearthrug, her dress touching me, her clasped hands resting on the table.

Shall I ever forget her face, as she looked at me, her eyes full of wicked mirth, and her mouth twisting with a nervous grimace quite new to Barbara.

"Think again," she said, "and consider if there is nothing you can part with. No," she went on, impatiently, seeing my look of stupid wonderment at her persistency; "I don't desire any of the things we used to turn over together. What use would your great-grandfather's buckles, or your grandmother's spectacles, or the locket your mother gave you, or even your father's silver watch, be to me now? I may take a fancy for them all in good time, and get you to let me have them; but there is only one present you can give me to-night I should value. Cannot you guess what it is? Help me a little, do! for I am ashamed to ask for it."

A glimmering of her meaning came upon me then; but I thrust that new light aside as utterly deceptive.

"I have nothing," I said, "nothing in the world, I can imagine you would care to possess."

"Not yourself, Wallace?" Her bowed head was hidden on my arm as she spoke.

"Myself!" I repeated.

"Yes. There is nothing else in the world I want to have. Oh! Wallace, do you think me dreadfully bold? Surely, you care for me? Surely—surely—you are not going to refuse me?"

I had risen by this time and put her in my father's easy-chair. She was trembling like a frightened child, and the colour kept coming and going in her cheeks with painful fitfulness. For myself, I walked up and down the room, trying to steady my voice—trying to realise what had happened.

For one moment I fancied she was playing with me—jesting in cruel sport; but now I understood that all through she had been acting a part—that the old love had never waned.

And my own heart was hers; and yet it could not be—it could never be.

Somehow I told her this. I do not remember the precise words I spoke, but I did manage to make her understand.

I pointed out the difference there was between Miss Gilderdale of The Grange and the Barbara of our happy youth—between the heiress to a great property and the little girl who might, without outraging the world's opinion, have married a poor, struggling fellow like myself. I showed her how bitter it would be to both of us if, hereafter, people pointed to her husband as a fortune-hunter—a man who had taken advantage of her girlish affection and trustfulness to draw her into an unsuitable union.

She came close to me and pleaded.

Oh, Barbara! never a man, I think, so besought a woman to marry him as you did me to take your hand that night; but I was as steel to your entreaties. How I did it I know not; but I neither took you in my arms, nor strained you to my heart, nor kissed you lovely, tear-stained face.

I refused you, little Gilderdale. The gift you brought in your hand I would have none of; and at last, calling me hard and cruel, you went out into the night sobbing like a child.

At a safe distance I followed and watched you turn into the gate of The Chestnuts and pass round in the darkness into the garden where we had passed so many a happy hour. Then I went home again, locked my portmanteau, and was out of Rowford within the hour.

CONCLUSION.

Business came to me, the tide of fortune had long been on the flow, and I was doing admirably well, when one day Mr. Chester, solicitor to the Gilderdale family, who had come to my chambers to speak to me about a great trial that was near at hand, produced a Liverpool newspaper containing this paragraph:—

"Amongst the passengers by the Cunard steamer is Kenneth Gilderdale, Esq."

"That will be awkward for Miss Gilderdale," he remarked.

"Why?" I asked.

"Kenneth Gilderdale, who was supposed to have died in California, will be entitled to all the property now held by his niece."

"Indeed," I said. To save my life, I could not have made any more appropriate remark.

"It is a pity Miss Gilderdale did not marry before this happened. She will scarcely have a chance of making a very good match now."

"It would," I answered, "have been rather awkward had she married a man who wanted the estates and found out afterwards she had no right to them."

Mr. Chester made no reply. He only looked at me a little curiously. I often thought he knew how it had been between Barbara and myself.

Time went on. The great case was over, and briefs came to my chambers as they had never come before. I often saw Mr. Chester, but he never again spoke of Kenneth Gilderdale; nor did I.

From Rowford arrived tidings of how the information had been received there; of the exultation of the mothers whose sons had been refused; of the despair of Mrs. Sternland; the rage of her husband; the sympathy of the Archdeacon; and the quiet sorrow of my brother Hubert.

"Poor Barbara!" he would say softly. "Your time of sunshine has been brief enough, poor Bab. Poor foolish little Poppy."

And then Poppy herself arrived—a very quiet and subdued edition of the Miss Gilderdale who had lorded it over Rowford.

"Quiet," said my aunt, "but not discontented."

"She got frightfully snubbed at first at The Chestnuts; but, as it appears her mother's allowance is to continue, Mr. Sternland tolerates her stay. She was here yesterday and spoke quite cheerfully about her fortune. Says she will always have enough for her wants, that all her money never bought her happiness. My dear Wallace, do you know something in her manner makes me think, spite of her flightiness and flirting, she was fond of you all through last winter, and only wanted you to speak."

My time of leisure was at hand, and when it arrived I went down to Rowford. Ere long Barbara and I were more to each other than we had ever been before, and Hubert, seeing how it was with us, said to me, "God bless you, Wallace," and to her, "So we are to be brother and sister after all."

The young ladies of Rowford thought Mr. Wallace Vanner must be a "poor-spirited creature, spite of all his cleverness," and their mammas decided with one accord that Barbara Gilderdale was a designing little hypocrite; but the opinions of Rowford mattered neither to Barbara nor myself. We had passed into that fairyland where blame has as little power to annoy, as praise to please.

We were not married at Rowford, but, very quietly, in London, Mr. Chester giving away the bride, and providing breakfast for the few friends we asked to be present at the ceremony.

When did it dawn upon me that my darling was not happy? Long before the honeymoon had expired I felt an intangible something creeping up like a shadow between myself and utter contentment. What was it? I could not tell—I could not imagine. Of her own free will she had given herself to me, or I should have fancied Barbara a loveless bride. She would sit looking out into vacancy; she would start when I spoke to her; she would shrink and tremble when I laid my hand on hers.

"Are you ill, Barbara?" I said to her, one day, when I could bear my own imaginings no longer.

"I think I must be," she answered, with averted face.

"Can I do anything to make you better?" I asked.

"Yes. Take me back to England. I am tired of all these foreign places. I am sick of pictures and cathedrals. Take me home. I want to go to The Grange. I have done something wrong, Wallace. I will tell you what it is when we reach home."

"Tell me now, my darling," I entreated. "Any certainty would be better than this suspense."

"No," she answered; "no. At home, if you refuse to forgive me, I shall have grandmamma. Here there is no one."

"Am I not more to you than any other person in the world?" I asked, hurt and astonished.

"Yes, oh! yes," she said; "but I am afraid of you."

And it was true: she did fear me.

Such a dreary journey we had back to England! How long the way seemed down to The Grange! How cold and grey that afternoon when I assisted my young wife into the carriage sent to meet us and took my seat by her side!

At the entrance-gates she asked me to pull the check-string.

"Open the door, Cranford," she said to the footman; "we will walk up to the house."

"Will not Mrs. Gilderdale think this rather an odd proceeding, Barbara?"

"No," she said, shortly. "Come this way, Wallace; I want you to see the best part of the park."

We walked on in silence, walked on for a long distance, as it seemed to me, till at length, emerging from a thick plantation, we found ourselves on a rising ground which commanded a view of The Grange and all the goodly possessions of the Gilderdales.

"A fine property?" she said, interrogatively.

"Yes," I replied; "Mr. Kenneth Gilderdale is a fortunate man."

"He is not the owner," observed my wife.

"Who is, then?" I asked.

"You are. Oh! Wallace! Wallace! do not look at me like that. I have been almost heartbroken since I married you. Forgive me, my love! Forgive!"

"And Kenneth Gilderdale?"

"It was a mistake. The name was Gildersdale. For a few days I believed I was the original Cinderella once more, and when we found out our error (what a disappointment it proved to grandmamma), I thought I would not deceive anyone till I had secured the only thing in the world I really wanted."

She broke down crying, but I would not comfort her.

"It was all because of the love I bore you," she said, humbly, taking my hand in hers. "Wallace, speak to me, I declare I will never enter The Grange again unless you say you forgive me fully and truly."

"You ought not to have done this thing," I said.

"I know that; but it is done now, and you cannot undo it. As you would not have me by fair means"—through her tears I could see her eyes begin to sparkle with something of the mischief of old—"I was determined you should by foul. When I was

a child I followed you about till I made you like me, and I will never give you a moment's rest now till you are friends with me again."

She had parted with her secret now, and given over the burden of it to me; and, just as in the days of which she had spoken, she watched and waited till she saw my face relax, so now she watched and waited till she could win some answering smile from me.

"Barbara was determined to have her own way, Mr. Vanner," said Mrs. Gilderdale, as we sat together on the evening of the same day.

"She has been trying to have it all her life," I answered.

A few months later it occurred to me to ask Mrs. Vanner a question.

"By-the-bye, Barbara, what have you done with all your Philopenas?"

"Sent them back ages ago. All but you," she answered, saucily.

CHRISTMAS, IDEAL AND REAL.

FROM OUR SPECIAL MISANTHROPE.

I am no such thing, special or general, but an ordinary middle-aged man—a man living alone, as it happens, and owing neither family nor friends. The Editor of this Journal takes an unfair advantage of his office in putting this unpopular title upon his reluctant contributor. There is a common prejudice against it, as there is another prejudice, in minds of a different complexion, against the name of philanthropist. Nobody has a right to call me, John Bendy Ball, either one or the other. Certainly I am not a philanthropist; much less a humanitarian. I don't admire the general behaviour and disposition of my fellow man. It's much the same as my own; I should like a change when I look into my neighbour's habits of feeling and thinking—to see something brighter, nicer, and better. You may talk of the Ideal, but I stick to the Real, and here we stick in the mud. Human Nature, altogether, is like the fine old English Institution of Christmas, which I have got to write about. I don't mean the Church Christmas, the New Testament Christmas, or the Family Affections Christmas. These are no doubt very good, for many people in England who are able to enjoy them. In Scotland, I believe, they don't keep a Church Christmas; but some good Christians of that Kirk, as well as here, keep the holy festival in their hearts all the year round. Family affection is a sweet thing, I am sure, for a man who has wife and children, or brothers and sisters, or a father and mother, or any surviving parent, or even cousins. I am not such a happy man. I was separated in early youth from natural kindred. I do not go much into any of my neighbours' houses, except they want some one to help or cheer them a bit. How can I speak of the Reality of a Family Affection Christmas? Nor yet of the Church Christmas, for, though I go to church every Sunday evening, I can't leave my station in the morning, on account of the 12.35 train, as you will presently understand. I must therefore speak only of the common notion, that of the Profane and Vulgar Christmas—the December Jollification—the conventional, convivial, jovial, genial, Bacchanalian, Saturnalian, gormandising, guzzling, rousing, roystering, revelling, romping, High Jinks; of this Supreme Annual Joke, as it seems to be considered, which comes round on the 25th day of the last month. This extravagant practical joke of the English popular Christmas, in the Ideal type of it, like the Chivalry and Monasteries of the Middle Ages, and like Human Nature in all ages, may be very fine, glorious, and beautiful—that is to say, in the Ideal; but the Real is a very different concern. Now, suppose I were to say that I don't altogether like Human Nature *Real*—my own disposition included, of course—would you call me a Misanthrope? That word, I believe, is Greek, and means a man-hater. I don't hate any man. Why should I? None of them ever did me any harm; I'm not afraid they ever will; I don't know that anyone ever tried to; but if they did I would take care to prevent it as far as I could. On the other hand, I should have no objection to doing mankind some sort of good, at small cost and trouble to myself; or I should rather like to see somebody else do them good. You don't call that being a Misanthrope, or hater of one's race and kind? It's all bosh and Ideal nonsense; there never was such a person. Timon of Athens, and that nasty brute Apemantus, I should say, belong to the Ideal, and they don't lodge here. If I must go to Shakespeare for a character motto, it's in "Hamlet." What does he say? "Man delights not me, nor woman either." That's all, and why that? Because "there's something rotten in the state of Denmark?"—you don't say, rotten in the state of his own heart; but if you were to say it, Hamlet won't deny it. Go to, now, for a misanthrope yourself, and be hanged to you, if every such misanthrope as I am deserves hanging! But, in that case, I warn you, that we shall "make a fat pair of gallows;" for you'll have to deal with the great body of mankind itself. This is the philosophy of John Bendy Ball. He never attempted or pretended to set up any philosophy, till he was ordered here to write about the "Ideal" and the "Real," like the late Bulwer Lytton, whose "Ernest Maltravers" we have read in our idle youth. Bosh again! Stuff and nonsense! I mean that for criticism, but I must give it you "short," as they say at the bank counter, instead of in long-winded metaphysical sentences. Let me fill my cherrywood pipe with a pinch of Bristol bird's-eye. Now, a light! Thank you! Puff, puff, puff! I feel a little better, and I will tell you all about it. That is to say, how I come to be scribbling here; I would rather be minding my own business.

The Editor of this Journal came up to me last Friday, as you will hear, and asked me to write him a Christmas article. Fancy that request, to a railway official! I told him plainly I was no believer in the sham hilarity of the season. "I don't keep it," said I—just as the woman said at the little shop up the village when I asked her for Bristol bird's-eye. "Oh, yes!" says the Editor, "we all know you're a regular cynic; but it will be an amusing novelty if you will treat it your own way. Write against Christmas, if you like. I should like to see how you will run it down." There it is, the flagrant and scandalous management of our Public Press! The Editor of a Leading Journal employs one man, on Tuesday, to write an article upon one side of a public question; another man, on Thursday, to write on the opposite side. That is conducting a paper with Principle, is it—dealing with Opinions as if they were Fashions? Well, the Editor calls me a Misanthrope; but I'll be even with him. He bade me write against Christmas, if I thought it a sham; he added something about "Advocatus Diaboli;" but I care as little for his Latin as I do for his Greek. Such ribaldry is odious from a literary man in authority, who should be seriously intent upon the public welfare. If ever the Diabolus wanted an Advocatus, which is scarcely likely in the unregenerate state of the human heart, let no brief or retaining fee be sent to your humble servant. My intention is to plead a case on the opposite side, in calmly setting forth some reasons for dissent from a stale conventional imposture. Isn't that last sentence neatly rounded off?

The present writer, John Bendy Ball, has a particular dislike to speaking so much of himself. You must have perceived



A DRESS REHEARSAL. BY J. C. DOLLMAN.



CHRISTMAS, IDEAL AND REAL. BY HARRY FURNISS.

that there is not a particle of *egotism* in the above three quarters of a column he has already written. But he must briefly explain his own position, and the cause of his dealing with this subject. He is by no means so great a man in his line as the Editor of this famous illustrated weekly paper, which carries pictorial instruction round the world. But J. B. B. is a man who has a Line, or is on a Line; and that Line is the Singleby and Little Pedlington branch of the Great East-Western Railway. Six years ago, when this Line was opened for traffic, J. B. B., who had just then suffered an honest bankruptcy in his small grocery shop at Beerborough, was appointed to be station-master at Woodfield. It is a post which exactly satisfies his meek ambition. Its duties are not excessively laborious, with only six down trains and half a dozen up trains, besides two luggage-trains at night, in the twenty-four hours. The wages are sufficient for the wants of a childless widower. Few men in England, on the railway or off it, in country or in town, are less tempted to repine at their personal lot than he is. The station-master has a comfortable bed at his lodging in the village half a mile distant. He goes nowhere, and visits nobody, but chooses to spend the whole day, and part of the night, both late and early, within the premises of his official domain. When he has posted up his account-books, checked, docketed, and filed his way-bills, prepared his store of tickets for issue to departure passengers, and filled up his return of train arrivals, he defies the malice of the world. He will pace for hours the well-swept platform of Woodfield station, as the staid Lieutenant, R.N., in Byron's "Childe Harold," walks the stately quarterdeck of H.M.S. He will mildly but firmly give reasonable orders to Jem Sanders, the attendant porter in greenish velvet jacket, or to the boy-clerk, Master Dick Davis, whose services are often borrowed by the office at a neighbouring junction. There is no bookstall or newspaper-vendor at this quiet rural place. Here is no refreshment counter or bar, with mouldy buns, muddy coffee, nauseous tea-water, sour malt liquors, and a pert young lady to serve you out with all. The station-master reigns here in peace. He is monarch of all he surveys within these precincts. He sees, looking out beyond them, a fair prospect of soft, rich, verdant meadows; a clear, broad stream, the haunt of trout and salmon, that murmurs ever flowing over its shingly bed; the farther bank all covered with fine old beech-woods, through an opening of which is seen the fair front of Tilney Hall; the hills behind and above, rising with various shades and tints of greenness, that bear upon their graceful summit the fleecy summer clouds. Why should not the station-master here be a very happy man? Such is the mood of J. B. Ball in his leisure hours, after sunset on a fine July evening, when he smokes the pipe of peace, when the last up train has sped on its way express to London. The life of a solitary rural station-master is perhaps not unlike that of a turnpike-gate keeper of the last generation. Sam Weller and Mr. Pickwick took it for granted that the 'pike-keeper should be a misanthropic sort of man. I don't see it, for I don't myself feel it. The Editor has no right to think so ill of me. But I shall here inform you of his conduct, and I shall only ask you, has he treated me fairly, about the writing of this Christmas article for his paper?

He travels up and down my Line (first class) every week in the year, except in the long autumn holidays, when I hear he is in Scotland, or Norway, or Switzerland, or yachting in the Mediterranean. He rents a pleasant country-house and some land, five miles from my station, and when he comes from London, either his groom, with a led saddle-horse, is here waiting; or his wife or daughters have driven over the pony-carriage, with two pretty black tits, to meet him and carry him home; or there is a close carriage in wet weather. For Mr. Editor is a great swell, with a salary of £1200 a year, besides private income, lives in a fashionable house in town, and is a member of two Pall-mall clubs. I dare say he is worth all that; it is only since he came that the weekly circulation has been above half a million. Well, he comes down here, meets me on the platform, and says he, in a lofty, condescending sort of way, "Oh, Mr. Ball, they tell me you used to write for the papers and magazines?"

"Well," said I, "it's a long time ago, but I once had some little connection with the Press." The fact is, I reported the petty sessions for the *Beerborough Weekly Herald* before I set up in the grocery trade; and when I was courting poor Sarah, whom I married and have lost, there were two copies of verses by me, "Love's Atonement," and "The Angel of the Moonlight," that were sent to the "Family Visitor," and they were put in. "But, of course," says I, "you know my position here, and that I've something else to think of now."

"I know you're a cultivated man," says this flattering London editor; "I've seen the few books you keep in that little closet yonder, with your files of accounts, and waybills, and ledgers. There's your Bible, your Shakspeare, your English History and your Natural History. No man wants any more than those rational studies for the real improvement of his mind. Now, could you find a little time, before I go up to town next Tuesday, to write me a little essay for my Paper—for the Christmas Number, you know? Of course, we'd pay you the usual rate per column."

I hesitated but a moment, for I really wanted a few guineas; but I said I didn't think I could put together anything good enough. "Oh, nonsense! I'm the best judge of your ability," the Editor replied, in his decisive way. He thrust into my hand an Engraving, proof on India paper, with "CHRISTMAS, IDEAL AND REAL," written under it. "There," he said, "give us two columns or so about that; I'll see you again at the eleven o'clock train on Tuesday." Without another word, he mounted his horse, and cantered away to the pheasant preserves at Marley. The fact is, he has company staying with him there, young Mr. and Miss Windsor and Sir Harry Acton. They'll take up all his time. I suppose the printers will want "copy" when he gets back to his office in town. So he puts off upon me a share of his writing work.

This happened, as I tell you, on Friday morning last. On Sunday, at church-time, by chance seeing him again, I begged him in vain to let me off. The task lies heavy on my mind. If it is in me, I will have it out; if it isn't in me, I can't help it. I will take a text from one of my books, like our clergyman making a sermon for the pulpit. Let me try to get a start from Macaulay's "History of England:—

"Christmas had been, from time immemorial, the season of joy and domestic affection, the season when families assembled, when children came home from school, when quarrels were made up, when carols were heard in every street, when every house was decorated with evergreens, and every table was loaded with good cheer. At that season all hearts not utterly destitute of kindness were enlarged and softened. At that season the poor were admitted to partake largely of the overflowings of the rich, whose bounty was peculiarly acceptable on account of the shortness of the days and severity of the weather. At that season the interval between landlord and tenant, master and servant, was less marked than through the rest of the year. Where there is much enjoyment there will be some excess; yet, on the whole, the spirit in which the holiday was kept was not unworthy of a Christian festival."

I suppose, now, this may stand for the genuine English Christmas Ideal. There is a higher and more sacred ideal, with the religious associations which we ought to cherish; but I'm

not going to quote the Bible just here. It will be enough to quote my Shakspeare, "So hallowed and so gracious is the time!" To which I might further add another quotation, "Look on this picture, and on that!" For it is my cue to make some observations upon the contrast between a certain Ideal Notion of Christmas, which I hold to be a Vulgar Notion, and Regular Upset—such a bother with the Christmas hampers on our Line—which most of us have to suffer in this hurley-burley of late December. As Shakspeare says once more, "Upon this hint, I spake."

Three things I hold in aversion, and a fourth is odious to me, J. B. B., in the vulgar notion and practice of Christmas:—

1. Wasteful and unwholesome excess in eating and drinking.
2. Cumbersome apparatus and performance of some antiquated observances, long since devoid of meaning, with which are mingled the tricks of a stale buffoonery.
3. Factitious parade of a pretended grand social concord of benevolent sympathies, resulting in no particular good works, that I can see, anywhere actually done.
4. The figment of connecting any amount of gluttony, stale ceremony and buffoonery, and social hypocrisy aforesaid, with a venerable custom of the Church.

These are grave charges, the proofs of which may be drawn from examples shown in the page of Engravings, and from everybody's yearly observation of the facts.

There is, I gladly confess, a true Christmas Ideal, worthy of all regard. It is not that Happy Christmas which is confronted in the Illustration with a ludicrously miserable picture of the unhappy accidents and inconveniences of the season, under the name of Christmas Real. When the annual parade of this stock subject takes place in our periodical publications, what we see put forward is not the genuine Christmas of domestic affections, or that of ineffable religious emotions. These are sacred and private. It is the eating and drinking saturnalia, the Christmas of rollicking popular humour and fancy. It is as though our ideal of the Drama were taken from "Punch" at the street-corner, or from the Pantomime of Clown and Harlequin, instead of from Shakspeare acted by a Kean or a Siddons.

1. Is Christmas, indeed, that Falstaffian grey-haired buffoon, leering over the plum-pudding and the reeking punch-bowl, idiotically grinning at his own senseless talk, luring the guests at table to gluttonous and bibulous excess, which he calls "making merry"? Let me rather sit down alone, as I shall on the 25th of December, to a mutton-chop and mashed potato, with half a pint of home-brewed, than endure the presence of this gross patron of greediness at the most sumptuous feast. His end is destruction, and that of all whose belly is their god, by some disgusting form of disease. More doleful in aspect, yet less repulsive to the discerning observer, and worthy of pity rather than of scorn, is the figure of a Real Christmas victim of the winter chills and catarrhs. I do feel really sorry for this poor old gentleman, or what is left of him alive, beneath the crusted mass of icicles and snow that appears to symbolise his painful sufferings from the cold. The tub of hot water for his poor shrivelled feet, the basin of gruel for his exhausted stomach, are the mildest and safest remedies that could be prescribed. It is to be hoped they will yet bring him round, if he be spared the administration of more violent bodily medicines, of the draughts and pills which besiege the hapless invalid on both sides of his chair. Let the annoyance of worldly business, of Christmas bills and subscriptions, and other calls for money, be kept from disturbing his mind! Rest, indeed, is what we mostly need at Christmas. Snug comfort; not the boisterous revelry which seems to be personified by that demoniacal toper sitting above, with the brimming goblet in his wicked old fist, making a hypocritical after-dinner speech over what he falsely describes as good cheer. Go to bed, thou reckless old sinner! and, taking a few spoonfuls of arrowroot, try to remember thy prayers, and to sleep the tranquil slumbers of an innocent second childhood! Yet will that second plateful of pudding, and that third mince pie, lie all night heavy on thy guilty stomach.

2. The Waits, consisting of a venal band of fiddlers, fifers, and singers, making a strange medley of needless noises, an hour or two past midnight in our city streets, are a relic of the rudest barbarism. I should like, well enough, to hear the children of our Sunday school sing a genuine Christmas carol, on the village green or in the churchyard, at eight o'clock in the morning, after a good night's sleep in their beds at their parents' homes. But it is sad to hear infantine voices mixed with the hoarse bawling of men's and women's throats grown rough by "goes" of gin, and with the squealing of scraped catgut that inspires, on other nights, the queer dancing at a twopenny hop. It is painful to know that they are impressed for this dreary service by the greed of sordid speculators on the collection of sixpences and copper coins; and that the poor boys and girls will probably get more kicks than halfpence in the distribution of their gains. Nocturnal mendicancy, in the guise of street minstrelsy, is not to be made a fit and suitable juvenile employment from its association with the text of a hymn or anthem. I should be glad to see this custom disallowed by our police authorities, as well as the custom of begging for money "to burn the Old Pope," or "to burn Guy Fawkes," and that idiotic cry, with the proffered oyster-shell, "Please, Remember the Grotto!" Let the School Boards, I pray you, deliberate upon these matters, and protect the poor children from their natural perverters, who abuse their innocence for sordid gain.

3. Another relic of barbarism is the sprig of Mistletoe, with a forgotten mystic superstition haunting its strange-looking leaves and berries, as when Julius Cæsar inquired concerning the usages of the Ancient Druids. Kissing, between young people, is very nice indeed, a natural and innocent delight up to a certain age; though I never knew a manly boy who could abide it, for himself, between the ages of ten and sixteen. Above the latter age it becomes a more serious and responsible act. But the fuss of a special license, under the Druids' sacramental plant, for a mere harmless salute in this manner among little children, does not seem likely to have a salutary influence on their minds. A little girl of seven or eight years has no business to imagine that her kisses can have any different value to the playmate from another family, than to her own brother, whom she kisses freely, unceremoniously, and unaffectedly, whenever she is pleased with him. If the Mistletoe be still cherished, let it be intertwined with the Holly and the Ivy, as a mere adornment of the indoor winter scenery. For my own part, if I chose to kiss any woman, old or young, she being disposed to allow me, I'd wait for no branch of a scarce vegetable to be hung above our heads.

Ice and snow, being seasonable phenomena of nature, beautiful to see and provocative of healthful sport, do not incur reasonable animadversion. They would be altogether delightful to all but invalids, if only they melted at once, in a few moments, instead of gradual thaw. The snow, which is so inexpressibly lovely in its original purity, the wondrous apparition of atmospheric moisture taking visible form in masses of microscopic crystals, is converted into the vilest slush by admixture with foul, muddy water from the choked street gutters, too surely destroying the soundest leather boot.

This, indeed, is one of the miseries of winter, to be set off against its reputed festive and social joys, but it is one for which our Christmas institutions are not to blame. Nor shall

I accuse Old Father Christmas of tempting rash and foolish persons to slide or skate upon the frail surface of thin or rotten ice, in spite of the warning "Dangerous!" legibly inscribed on a signboard. An immersion even in shallow water is no trifling risk to health, and perhaps to life, unless the vital warmth be quickly restored. But it is not the fault of Christmas if we suffer from the cold, be it wet or dry; that property belongs to winter, and the seasoning is good for most things on earth that live.

Pudding, eaten in moderation, though it be a compound of suet, flour, eggs, raisins, currants, sugar, milk, citron-peel, and a variety of spices, not well calculated for safe digestion, shall not be utterly proscribed by law. I do not hold with the gastronomic Puritans of "Hudibras," who would austere disparage that favourite dish, and who would even, upon this occasion,

Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the nose.

I gladly tolerate, for more robust stomachs than my own, the provision of rich viands which I have been content to renounce, as well as the sipping of punch and most of the wines. Let the selection of food and liquor be wisely adjusted to the bodily condition. But who can deny that our reckless management of the Christmas table is the baneful cause of myriad woes, to the family doctor's profit, in the month of January—to the mother's present sorrow, to the pain of ignorant childhood, and to the cost of Paterfamilias in his next Christmas bills?

That fatal word, "bills," is a fell reminder of the peculiar pecuniary demands which Christmas and the New-Year's Day are wont to bring upon the ordinary British householder. But of his legal liabilities and obligatory unwilling gratuities I do not care to write at length. Behold the good man's perplexity, as shown at the bottom of the page, beset with duns and customary beggars, or expectants of a gift which he dares not refuse! This last kind of payment is scarcely an exercise of liberality, far less of charity; but a concession to the force of outward custom. It soon takes all the change out of his £5 banknote, and perhaps calls for the dissipation of another and yet another banknote, in showers of gold and silver coin, according to his rank and repute for riches.

4. Such are the conventional ordinances of a modern English popular Christmas, viewed, I admit, in their less favourable aspects and effects. The ancient Christmas of Merry England in the Olden Time was perhaps very different. Its glorious and gracious spirit, if our hearts were as big as they used to be, should abide with us all the year round; but, I fear, the Nineteenth Century has the heart of a snob, with a borrowed parcel of brains, and with the hands and feet of a giant. The external preparations of Christmas are worthless, indeed, were they still practicable in this age, without its genial spirit of Christian brotherhood, of which hospitality and all the other forms of charity should be the natural issue. But even those outward trappings and shows or signs of a Christian Festival, which is nothing if not sacred, are past revival in the present state of our social and domestic manners. They can no longer be reproduced in the straitened and sequestered interior of an ordinary middle-class household. The yule log, the boar's head, the snap-dragon, the masqued mummers, the brimming wassail-bowl, the boisterous frolic, the game of forfeits, the round dance, all the pageantry and revelry of Bracebridge Hall—this exhibition, like the tournament at Eglinton Castle, is only possible in some great rural mansion. It will there appear but an elaborate freak of pedantic antiquarian fancy, neither Ideal nor Real; like heralds and champions in plate armour at a Lord Mayor's Show. But in the houses, whether in town or country, of a majority of private families, with their carpeted and wall-papered rooms, their burnished firegrates, the meagre and languid elegance of their appointments and service, High Jinks cannot find place. The old-fashioned Christmas observances should be left enshrined in the records of the past. As for Christmas charities, meaning the distribution of doles to the poor, let them be given at the time when need is sorest, when the cold of winter is most severe, and wages are most apt to be stopped. The latter part of January, as I take it, usually sees more prevailing distress of this hard nature. But the charity of a single week in the year too much resembles the Sunday piety of one day in the week. I claim no right, as I feel no qualification, to preach seriously upon these duties. A solitary man, I have no kinsfolk to invite and share with them a Christmas dinner; and there are reasons, buried deep in my saddest memories of past life, why I decline to be a guest of the kind neighbours. A poor man, though in want of nothing, I have no money to give, to save, or spare; and there is little superfluity in my simple board or lodging. I lead, you will say, an unsocial life, but am not quite a misanthrope. Go you, and love mankind, and keep your happy Christmas; "for mine own part," as Hamlet says, again, "look you, I'll go pray." Yes; pray that I may love, not men and women only, but all living creatures, and the great Source of Life Above:—

He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

With this, I have done; the Essay on Christmas has reached its final thought. J. B. B. will never write another. His daily routine of duty is enough for him. The Woodfield station is the centre of his world. Trains come in, and trains go out, both up and down the Line. The station-master goes with none, unless by orders of the Traffic Superintendent or Directors. His travels are but for an hour, where his own legs carry him, in the village or the fields of this green valley; they will end in its quiet churchyard. He sees and serves the trains, express, ordinary, and parliamentary, with first, second, and third class carriages, luggage-vans, and horse-boxes. These are for the paying customers of the Great East-Western Railway Company; he is only their paid public servant.

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THE LANCET (No. 1, Vol. II., 1856):—

"This ingenious apparatus of Mr. Pulvermacher has now stood the test for some years. It may be used by the medical attendant or by the patient himself, and the operator can now diffuse the galvanic influence over an extensive surface or concentrate it on a single point. In these days of medico-galvanic quackery it is a relief to observe the very plain and straightforward manner in which Mr. Pulvermacher's apparatus is recommended to the profession."

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efficacy of these appliances is supplemented by the following paragraph recently found in the standard work (p. 76, 1867) of JOHN KING, M.D., Clinical Professor of Obstetrics at Cincinnati:—
"In those cases where it is desirable to produce a continuous current of galvanism, and without the intervention of conductors or electrodes, there is no instrument superior to Pulvermacher's Improved Galvanic Chains."
"These Chains are very useful in many nervous disorders:

Muscular Debility	Aphonia	Rheumatism
Hemiplegia	Epilepsy	Dyspepsia
Paralysis	Torpid Liver	Paralysis (Bladder)
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Neuralgia	Writter's Cramp	Hysterical Cramps
Sciatica	Spinal Irritation	and Contractions
Stiff Joints	Nervous Debility	Loss of Smell
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"Medical and Surgical Electricity," p. 137, 1871:—
"Pulvermacher's Belts have been recently modified and improved, and are one of the best forms of galvanic chain or belt that has yet been devised for direct application to the body."

GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION and

GENERAL DEBILITY.
"Turnchapel, Plymouth, June 16, 1878.

"Dear Sir,—I beg to inform you that the action of your Belt has been decidedly beneficial. The general tone of the system, digestion, and doubtless the assimilation of food (as proved by an increase in weight), have all improved, and better rest is enjoyed at night. It would, perhaps, be too much to expect a complete cure, for there were no doubt organic changes in the liver and digestive organs, but the use of the Belt is still being continued. I will report again with pleasure any further progress.—I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,
J. W. HELCHER, M.D., Staff Surgeon-Major."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. PARALYSIS.

"42, Grove-road, Regent's Park, N.W., Jan. 21, 1876.
"I have much pleasure in stating that a lady, aged twenty-nine, who had been under my care for a severe and protracted attack of typhoid fever, resulting in partial paralysis of the nerves supplying the right leg, completely recovered the power of all her limbs in six weeks by the use of Pulvermacher's Galvanic Chains for the spine and leg. All external and internal remedies had previously been tried and found ineffectual. I have frequently found Pulvermacher's Chains of great service.
NORMAN S. KEER, M.D., F.L.S."

"J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS HEADACHE.

"Sandwell Lodge, Handsworth, Birmingham,
Oct. 4, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—Having been afflicted with severe nervous headache for more than forty years (and I am now sixty-five years of age), I bear of your Galvanic Belts, and was persuaded to try one, which, I am happy to tell you, relieved me the first time of wearing. I have had a slight attack since, but the Belt has always removed the pain, and I seldom have it now, and it is several months since I first tried it. I am thankful to you under Providence, for the cure, and I wish it made public for the benefit of sufferers.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,
ISAAC WHITE."

"Mr. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"London.
"Sir,—I perceive in the 'Medical Times' and other papers that, in their report of the meeting of the 'Harveian Medical Society,' much mention is made of your Galvanic Chains, and incidents are cited where they have proved of extraordinary benefit in Nervous Debility. My attention was drawn to the 'Medical Gazette' by a patient of mine, who, some years back, was cured of this malady, although it was one of nine years' standing, in three weeks, under the application of one of your Chains, and who now desires me to obtain a suitable one for some friend in the country, who is similarly afflicted. Sir C. Locock, Bart., has taken up the subject, and he has prescribed your Chains with marked success in Neuralgia and other acute nervous pains. I am extremely sorry I was absent from the Society when the Chains were brought forward and experiments were made with them, as I have to make some extraordinary communication relative to them, gathered from my experience of their effects on natives of India and Australia. A few years ago I purchased one from you, which I have, for a confirmed case of Debility, twenty years' standing, and, from its wonderful power in reducing this complaint, I obtained a great number of them abroad, and have always, more or less, found them successful.—Yours, &c.,
G. MICHANSON, M.D., &c."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. CHRONIC

RHEUMATISM.
"New Marske, Cleveland, Oct. 23, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—To the benefit of suffering humanity, certify that I was unable to follow any employment for two years, suffering from chronic rheumatism in both legs and feet. I was in several hospitals and derived no benefit. At last I tried your Chain-Band, and got cured in three months' time, and was able to follow my employment again.—Yours, sincerely,
H. OSCAR KELTZER."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. EXTREME NERVOUS

DEBILITY and EXHAUSTION.
"Newport, Mon., Sept. 18, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—I have worn your Bands constantly since March 8 last, and have received great, I may say marvellous, benefit from their use. At the time I wrote to you I was under the treatment of an eminent physician, but failed to get any benefit, and I tried your remedy as a last hope. I suffered from spitting of blood almost daily, and sometimes several times in the day; pains in nearly all parts of the body, twitching and quivering in limbs and eyelids. Towards evening the eyelids frequently drooped, and the eyes appeared half closed; at other times the upper eyelids would rise in an unnatural manner, noises and whistling sounds in ears and head, extreme coldness in feet and legs, low spirits, indigestion, palpitation of the heart, trembling on least excitement, great dryness in stomach and throat, disagreeable taste in mouth and bad breath, sleeplessness and despondency, and I feel almost certain that without your aid I could not have lived and retained my reason up to the present time. It is barely four months since I applied your Bands, and I am as follows:—All pains gone, all twitching gone, noises in head and ears gone, drooping and raising of eyelids gone, cramps and coldness in legs gone. I sleep well, and feel much stronger; all trembling gone, and, thanks to your appliance, I feel more free from pain than I have felt for a long time. I feel the deepest gratitude to you for the great benefit I have derived, and I hope that many may receive similar benefits by your invention. I owe my life to you, and I am at perfect liberty to make any use you like of this statement, using my initials only.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
T. S."

"Mr. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. SCIATICA.

"65, Gleebe-street, Glasgow, Oct. 12, 1876.
"Dear Sir,—I am happy to inform you that the Galvanic Chain I received from you for sciatica has been a complete success. Before I made application to you I had been under medical treatment for three or four weeks, and was getting disgusted with bottles and pills which were doing me no good, but the opposite, in taking away all appetite for food. I was advised to 'throw physic to the dogs,' and go in for a galvanic chain, which has resulted in a complete cure; for in less than a week I could run up the stairs as smart as most of people, although I am upwards of fourteen stone weight and fifty-five years of age. You may make what use you please of the above.—Yours truly,
D. FERGUSON."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Thorpe, Bidestone, Suffolk, Sept. 23, 1876.
"Dear Sir,—After several months' constant wear of your Galvanic Bands, I have much pleasure in testifying, for the benefit of others, to their marvellous powers in strengthening the whole body. The many evils with which I have suffered, the result of nervous debility, have gradually disappeared, and I now feel stronger than ever I did before. From my own experience I feel sure that they are a panacea for all the ordinary ills to which flesh is heir.—Yours truly,
J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

"W. RUSSELL, Junr."

GALVANISM v. GENERAL DEBILITY.

"Harvey-square, Lockwood, Sept. 15, 1876.
"Dear Sir,—I am glad to say that I am quite better; indeed, I have not been so well for a long time. I have been running about in the country for the last two months, and I wore your Band constantly all the time. If ever I feel ill again I shall write to you at once, and I shall advise all my friends to do the same.—Yours truly,
JOHN REID."

"J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUS DEBILITY.

"Eastfield, Newbury, Sept. 20, 1876.
"Dear Sir,—The effects of the Galvanic Belt you sent me are marvellous. I am and have been better than I ever expected to be. I have lost no time from work since I had it, whereas before I was often ill three or four days per week; and I have not felt so well for years as I have done since wearing your wonderful invention.—Yours truly,
J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

"JAMES EYRES."

GALVANISM v. NERVOUSNESS and

VARIOUS COMPLAINTS.
(Extract.)

"Lytton Lodge, Dingwall-road, Croydon.
"Will you kindly send a Chain-Band that can be worn round the loins for lumbago, &c.? I have good accounts of your Volta-Electric Chains from all quarters. Should you care to make use of my name you are quite welcome to do so.
ED. R. S. SHULDRHAM, M.D., M.A., Oxon."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. SCIATICA.

"45, Camden-grove, Peckham, S.E., July 27, 1876.
"Dear Sir,—With earnest thankfulness I beg to acknowledge the efficacy of your Volta-Electric Chain-Band. I had been suffering from a severe attack of sciatica for fourteen months; six months I was quite lame and confined to my room. Upon reading a testimonial in the 'Christian Globe,' I was induced to apply to you for one of the Bands, from which, in forty-eight hours, I was enabled to stand and sit. The pain from then has gradually decreased, and I have had no return of severity since, wearing it night and day, up to the present time, nine weeks. If you like to give my case publicity for the encouragement and good of others, I should have much pleasure in answering any question, and shall ever feel happy in recommending your Bands.—Yours respectfully,
HARRIET WHELAN."

"Mr. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. TOOTHACHE

HEADACHE, and RHEUMATISM.
"Crabtree-lane Crossing, Bursough, near Ormskirk, Lancashire, July 6, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—I have been wearing one of your Bands, and cannot speak too highly in praise of it. It has cured toothache, headache, and rheumatic pains; and, thank God, I am now doing well. You may make what use you like of this letter; so no more from your thankful patient,
JOHN LAWSON."

"Mr. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. NEURALGIA.

"Market Harboro', Desborough, Aug. 25, 1876.
"Mr. Pulvermacher,—Dear Sir,—The 21st Belt I purchased of you in October last has quite cured me of neuralgia in the head and face. When the Belt arrived I had been suffering intense agony, more or less, daily for nine months. For the first fortnight I wore the Belt night and day, then only at night for some weeks. I then left it off, and the pain returned. I put the Belt on again, and in a few minutes the pain left me. I have not had the least return now for six months. When I have nervous headache I put it on, and find it very soothing. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel to you for your very wonderful invention. You can make what use you like of this letter. I remain, yours, gratefully,
(Mrs.) J. BARLEY."

"W. CHARLTON."

GALVANISM v. PARALYSIS.

"Carnforth-lane, Sept. 18, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—The Galvanic Band I got from you has taken the pain from me, and I am gathering strength gradually. I can raise myself up in bed now, which I could not before I got your Band. I feel much stronger in my back, which is a blessing to me. It has done me more good than all the medicine I have taken.—Yours, &c.,
J. L. Pulvermacher, Esq."

"W. CHARLTON."

GALVANISM v. EXTREME NERVOUS

DEBILITY and EXHAUSTION.
"Newport, Mon., Sept. 18, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—I have worn your Bands constantly since March 8 last, and have received great, I may say marvellous, benefit from their use. At the time I wrote to you I was under the treatment of an eminent physician, but failed to get any benefit, and I tried your remedy as a last hope. I suffered from spitting of blood almost daily, and sometimes several times in the day; pains in nearly all parts of the body, twitching and quivering in limbs and eyelids. Towards evening the eyelids frequently drooped, and the eyes appeared half closed; at other times the upper eyelids would rise in an unnatural manner, noises and whistling sounds in ears and head, extreme coldness in feet and legs, low spirits, indigestion, palpitation of the heart, trembling on least excitement, great dryness in stomach and throat, disagreeable taste in mouth and bad breath, sleeplessness and despondency, and I feel almost certain that without your aid I could not have lived and retained my reason up to the present time. It is barely four months since I applied your Bands, and I am as follows:—All pains gone, all twitching gone, noises in head and ears gone, drooping and raising of eyelids gone, cramps and coldness in legs gone. I sleep well, and feel much stronger; all trembling gone, and, thanks to your appliance, I feel more free from pain than I have felt for a long time. I feel the deepest gratitude to you for the great benefit I have derived, and I hope that many may receive similar benefits by your invention. I owe my life to you, and I am at perfect liberty to make any use you like of this statement, using my initials only.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
T. S."

"Mr. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. INDIGESTION.

"8, Albert's-place, Abington-street, Northampton, July 21, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—As a remedy for that most distressing disease, Indigestion, your Bands have been to me the greatest blessing I have ever received. Before I wrote to you in March last I suffered most intolerably, the sense of fullness after eating a small quantity was painful, and I have frequently desisted from work till I felt relieved in some trifling degree. Now all this has disappeared. I eat my food heartily, and never feel any of the former suffering, and the benefit derived from wearing the Bands is great. I am persuaded in a more general way (to use an expressive word) they make me feel brighter when wearing them. I would be glad to write to or advise anyone who writes to me, and I think I shall be able to direct two new customers to you shortly.—I am, yours sincerely,
WILLIAM WILCOX TANNER."

"Mr. J. L. Pulvermacher."

GALVANISM v. PARALYSIS.

"Tostock-green, near Bury St. Edmunds, July 3, 1876.

"Dear Sir,—I have very great pleasure in bearing my testimony to the great benefit I have received from the Pulvermacher Bands you sent me to me in February last. I had been severely afflicted with paralysis all down one side, so that I had been quite unable to do anything for three years. I was not able to dress myself or turn myself in bed. I was six weeks inpatient in the Bury Hospital, and was discharged because my case was hopeless. I had been severely afflicted with paralysis all down one side, so that I had been quite unable to do anything for three years. I was not able to dress myself or turn myself in bed. I was six weeks inpatient in the Bury Hospital, and was discharged because my case was hopeless. I had been severely afflicted with paralysis all down one side, so that I had been quite unable to do anything for three years. I was not able to dress myself or turn myself in bed. I was six weeks inpatient in the Bury Hospital, and was discharged because my case was hopeless. 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GOD'S-ACRE.

BY SAMUEL READ.

I.
I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
The burial-ground God's-Acre! It is just;
It consecrates each grave within its walls,
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

IV.
Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom,
In the fair gardens of that second birth;
And each bright blossom mingle its perfume
With that of flowers which never bloomed on earth.

II.
God's-Acre! Yes, that blessed name imparts
Comfort to those who in the grave have sown
The seed, that they had garnered in their hearts,
Their bread of life, alas! no more their own.

V.
With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow;
This is the field and Acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow!—LONGFELLOW.

III.
Into its furrows shall we all be cast,
In the sure faith that we shall rise again
At the great harvest, when the Archangel's blast
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

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LITTLE BLUE BELL: THE LAST WALTZ.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD,
AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

I.

I suppose the hour must be wellnigh two o'clock in the morning, as the ball rages and I lean listlessly and rather unsympathetically against one of the snow-white pillars of the great hall at Charlemagne Abbey. It is all bathed in light, which seems like a white and brilliant mist: all tulles, flowers, jewels; while airy figures, twirling and whirling, fly past, much as the horses turn Tattenham-corner. The floor has grown like ice from the polishing of three or four hundred pairs of feet, and is, indeed, "smooth as Satan," a waiter has just remarked. At this hour of the morning the eyes grow a little weary; and one who looks on abstractedly, as I am doing, finds a not unpleasing dimness stealing over them, the successive rows of dancers as they fly by seeming to take the shape of whirling rings. While the orchestra, aloft in the gallery—is it not Skipper's well-known band, brought down from London, five-and-twenty strong?—stimulates the many twinkling feet, every crash of the cymbals having the effect of the spur dug deep into the racer's flanks. Late; or early, as it is, Skipper is still unflagging, will be unflagging until the end—until the moment it shall please the rapacious dancers to grow exhausted: a consummation, as he knows, to be looked for towards six o'clock. How calm, how careful, and yet spirited is the beating of his bow—that wonderful bow, which has wagged since ten o'clock! Skipper, like Kitty, is early, ever fresh and young. The man has a fine sense of duty.

Yet I own to being weary, having beaten time with my eyelids until time has beaten me, and find the hours dragging on heavily enough. Indeed, these shows were not "in my line," as the phrase goes; and it was only the pressing instances of my old friend, "poor, dear, good Lady Charlemagne," as effusive friends styled her, that forced me to this merry-making. Her handsome daughter, Edith Charlemagne, was to be married to the young Clovis, Lord St. Giles's eldest son; and the happy pair had been dancing together the whole night, to the admiration of the room. She was rather flushed with the exercise and responsibilities of the ball; for she had never stopped save for such refreshment as she found in his company in some sequestered nook, which had to be administered often enough. They were very young—he boyish, she girlish—and were enjoying themselves; and there was entertainment enough in the spectacle for such sober persons as I was—far too sober as I, no doubt, appeared to Miss Edith, who had had her "baptism of fire" that year; in short, had been "brought out."

Yet there were days—not very long before, too—when I enjoyed this Dervish dance as much as any of those now whirling round. But, with something like a weight of lead laid on your chest, it is difficult to import the proper airiness and poetry of motion. But here was my friend Lady Charlemagne beside me, proud and happy.

"I am so glad to have you here," she said; "and it was very good of you to come down; for I know it was an effort. Is not Edith looking well to-night? I suppose one of these days she will be, as I am to-night, watching her handsome daughter, and thinking how cruel it is to have to give her up."

So it went on the rather monotonous round—now quadrille, now lancers, now waltz and headlong galop, wild Baladava charges; the more sober dances were gradually becoming extinct, to the annoyance of what might be called the Quakers and Methodists of the ball-room, who, with their discreet measures, were coolly put aside in defiance of all law and agreement. At that time of night, to be "wading" patiently through steps and slow measures was unendurable; and, accordingly, here were the greedy waltzers and galopers devouring dance after dance; while the aggrieved quadrillers, partners on arm, looked on, rueful and indignant. And now I see Skipper bending down in earnest talk with a sort of deputation, who had waited on him, and now came back with alacrity and rejoicing, ready for fresh exertion.

II.

Hark! What was it that kindled for me a sudden interest in the proceedings? that made the nerves thrill and the pulse quicken? Where had I heard it? It seemed a strain lent from Paradise! How it rose, and fell, and swelled, and died away; growing tender, pleading, and pathetic; now turning into a fierce clash and whirl, as though impelled by despair and driven by furies; then becoming soothed into piteous entreaty, and winding out in a dying fall. It was, in short, one of those divine waltzes, as they may be called. Where, when, had I heard it? I knew it. There are a few of these that seem part of your life, like a poem. It may have happened that one of those tender, complaining measures has been the accompaniment to some important act. It is then no longer mere vulgar music. Some, such as the newer German Waltzes, touch strange mysterious themes, reaching beyond this earth. The time of night or morning, when it winds out, the lights whisking round in rings, the bewildering motion, the floating sylphs, the nebulous tulles, the flowers, the jewels, all join to make up the scene of wild festivity, and it would be enough, one might think. But the artful enchanter then suddenly dissolves into a sad and pathetic strain, for, merry as the dance is, a merry tune would not be in keeping; alternated with the crash of cymbals, and, desperate protest as it were, appeal for mercy or reckless defiance, to be succeeded even by grotesque and reckless antic, all, however, to revert to the pleading of the original strains, led by the sad, and winding horn! Such was the "last waltz" of this night, which thrilled me, yet seemed to thrill Skipper himself far more, who led, as some one near me said, now "like a demon," and now like a suppliant begging for mercy. What was it? Where had I heard it? It was charged brimful of agitating memories. Someone near me said flippantly, "Oh, that's the 'Loved and Lost'—pretty thing, isn't it?" And, looking down on the card, I read—

"WALTZ," "Geliebt und Verloren" (LOVED AND LOST)—Müller.

Again, where had I heard it? For it was music that seemed to belong to other spheres far away, and to time quite distant. There it went again, returning to the original sad song—a complaining horn, full of grief and pathos, which invited such dancers as were standing or sitting down to turn hurriedly, seize their partners, and once more rush into the revolving crowd! It was slow, and yet seemed fast as the many twinkling feet of the dancers. Skipper, mournfully sympathetic, beat time in a dreamy way, as though he were himself travelling back into the past, searching up some tender memories. Then turns briskly, and calls on his men, dashing into a frantic strophe, with crashing of cymbals and grass-hopper tripping of violins; dancers growing frantic with their exertions, and all hurrying round like bacchantes; the strain presently to relax and flag a little, as though growing tired—to halt and jerk—then, after a pause, the sad horn winds out the original lament in the old pathetic fashion. For how long

would it go on? Skipper knew well its charm, and was ungrudging in his allowance—would probably go over and over it again, so long as there were feet able to twirl. I know I could have listened till past the dawn!

III.

Suddenly there was a rustle of a dress, and there came tripping up to me, to rouse me out of this melodious dream, not the stately Edith with her eternal question, but a figure—one that I knew well, and that I had not seen for long. How I started! It was like an apparition.

"What!" I cried. "You here? When did you arrive? How did you come? What does it all mean?"

She laughed, and said, in her musical voice, "It's a mystery. Only just come. I was at another ball; and hush!" she added, "stolen away from bogie mamma!"

Such a merry laugh as she gave on that. "But I heard that you were down at Cottingham, buried in the country. Well, it is a surprise."

Glancing at my own reflected face that was beside me, it was curious to see how bright and eager it had become. But the apparition itself was sufficient to account for any change.

Now, conceive one of the most dainty, piquant little figures, with the most delicate and refined outline, an oval face, bright, animated, and questioning, with a small, exquisitely-shaped head. The fashion in which this head was set on the neck would have delighted a sculptor; and with its every turn came a series of beautiful curves and hollows. Such was Belle Cottingham—"Blue-Bell," as her friends spoke of her, from her fancy for ribbons of that colour, which were always in her hair or fluttering from the back of her neck, like a navy pennant—gay, animated little soul, surely intended to live in the bright light of the sun or in the soft yellow sheen of the ball-room. She was her mother's only daughter, and was supposed to have been spoiled and humoured, but, in reality, was not, as I well knew. Lady Louisa Cottingham, a busy woman of fashion, fond of enjoyment, was too much engrossed in her parties and in contriving a brilliant match for her son to take the trouble of performing any such process on her child—a chartered truant, who went on visits from house to house, where she was ever welcome. People wondered that this manoeuvring lady did not set more store by her airy, elegant daughter; or did not, as it is said on the turf, "declare to win" with such a high-bred little Arabian. Neither did Miss Blue-Bell herself take much thought about the matter. She had none of the mercantile views of her sisterhood, though she had a fine fortune, and might look for an alliance as fine. She only thought of her little gaieties, of the smiles and kindnesses that were sure to meet her everywhere, of whatever "fun" was going; for she was a graceful little tomboy in her way, and always found herself rather stiff and cramped among the fine folk when set up *en évidence*. Accordingly, there was a number of good, honest country folk—somewhat old-fashioned, perhaps, and in old-fashioned country houses—who loved and made much of this bright little soul. Among them she found a great deal of old-fashioned but hearty laughter, with traditional jests which were repeated faithfully on each recurring visit, and became thus jokes "in amber," and which the little heroine grew to think must equal those of the best wits of the day. These turned chiefly on the admiration of an elderly bachelor or two for herself—one Joe Hamilton, who sometimes blushed when rallied on the subject; and this conquest, it must be said, gave her more genuine pleasure than the serious devotion of more suitable admirers.

And, on the same principles, her intimates and "chums" were among certain mature though faithful spinsters, whom the fresh and tender little creature allowed to cement themselves to her on terms of impassioned friendship. Indeed, she had a long and rather troublesome *clientèle* of obscure personages, who perhaps found their interest in being thus attached to her, and who must have been inconvenient at times, but which she was too considerate to shake off. But in her soul was the true spirit of romance. She invested these homely people, because they loved her, with the most pre-eminent merit; and she always repeated, with the greatest delight and reverence, the little family incidents which she so enjoyed when at their houses. Never, in short, was there so natural, so piquant a little being, one so genuinely loyal and good-natured. She had certain stately and dignified ways of her own; was proud of her race and family; and would "sail" up the stairs to an evening party with an air that was almost haughty.

Now, how did I become acquainted with all this—I, a very grave being, that seemed to have been born and cradled in a library, who was at the Bar, wore horse-hair and a gown, and "scribbled" abundantly for the press? To such, girls might have seemed but a frivolous interruption, and certainly a distraction. I was pushing on to a fixed goal, sternly, and not looking to the right or to the left, but steadily forward. To one with such views the indulgence of "feelings" becomes a luxury—such as keeping a horse or a yacht—which only rich men can afford. Yet these fine stoical resolutions are but of little avail as working tools, and often snap in two like a badly tempered chisel. But in this faith, such as it was, did I go my way.

One Christmas I had been bidden down to a great house to make one of their guests—those "supernumeraries" which defile across the boards at such places where pageants of company-visits are mounted. It was with reluctance that I went, for it was a withdrawal from the beloved tomes and the ever diligent pen which travelled backward and forward like a pedestrian walking his number of miles in a number of hours; but there were influential personages to be there, and there was something to be gained. So I was persuaded to go, rather wearily, and determined to stay no longer than should be strictly necessary.

It was a bright sunny day when I arrived at the Morningtons' great castle. It was deserted. The family and all the guests were out, bestowed in various forms of junketing, shooting, riding, driving, or strolling. The halls were solitary. I wandered into the front drawing-room and sat down, to wait for the return of somebody, taking up a book. Nearly an hour went by, when I was startled by the sound of voices. This was alternated with the clearest and most silvery, yet, at the same time, the softest laugh. It came nearer and yet nearer. Not that of our hostess, surely, nor of her dragon-like daughters. Suddenly there entered abruptly, or, rather, flashed in, that bright apparition which I have so lately described; only now her cheeks were glowing, her hair tossed, and a fluttering little excitement quickened every nerve and motion. Blue ribbons streamed gaily from her pretty neck and head, as usual. Behind her was a tall, cold-looking being, with very black hair and a very white, sharp-edged nose, sharp enough to do duty as a "cheese-cutter."

She started when she saw me; then laughed, as if it was a good joke.

"Oh! I know. You're Mr. Eden, that they were expecting."

What I said, or what followed generally, does not matter; but she was not shy or put out. And I recollect that her com-

panion, who was one Colonel Labouchere, walked over to the window and kept apart, as if *contrariè*d, as the French say, at finding anyone in the room, or disdaining to notice a stranger.

After a quarter of an hour had gone by, I confess to being unusually pleased with the apparition; in fact, there was something so brilliant in the tones and colours and motions of this little figure that I felt not the least wish to get back to the heavy book. Then came the irruption of the chorus—those "Adelphi guests" whom the welcome luncheon tocsin had drawn from all quarters; or rather, that "noisy clapper" within, which Mr. Justice Greedy spoke of long ago, in the play, and which is far more accurate in giving the time.

I was strangely drawn to her from the first hour, though there was something very singular in her mode of treating me. She seemed to have taken a sort of dislike to me, or, at least, to have "an imperfect sympathy," as Mr. Elia says, for me; and this she showed by contemptuous tossings of her pretty head. This might have been set down to the promptings of the tall gentleman with the sharp nose, who assumed a sort of proprietorship or protectorship in her, and who—it may have been from a true instinct—had at once set me down as a future obstacle or trouble in his way. I could see that she was flattered by this preference and direction, though in a little awe of the great man. But he used, when he was "put out" at something, to speak to her rather austere and with reproach—as, "You shouldn't really do that; it's not quite correct." "But I'm not correct," she answered, with the soft, "roguish" eyes dancing merrily. "I never was, and never will be. I'll disgrace my family yet, I know."

"Oh! you really oughtn't to talk in that way," he would say, severely; "it's very foolish."

She saw that I had heard all this, and, with a droll maliciousness, turned it on me.

"Well, there is correctness personified," she said.

I confess to being annoyed that I should have been the one that she should have thus depreciated, and it mortified me; and I owned to myself that I was beginning to have a sort of interest—shall I so call it?—in her natural waywardness. It seemed to me rather a hard fate, as there were some there who quite indifferent to her, and who, I knew, thought her a frivolous little creature. And yet, at times, she abounded in civilities. No doubt this was a foolish sensitiveness; but still the indifference was shown in so a marked way. The general public were good enough to appreciate me, as I had seen a good deal and had something to tell, having known remarkable people, &c. But, so soon as I began to rehearse my experiences, there was one of the company that became *distrainé*, began to whisper to her neighbours, or criticise the pictures in a photograph-book. And yet, all the time, I must own that she was perfectly good-natured to me, as she was to everyone; but there was this secret air of superiority that was inexpressibly mortifying.

Her assiduous aide-de-camp and monitor, Colonel Labouchere, was, I learned, a very important personage—heir to Lord St. Denis, a distinguished soldier, and wealthy. Though of this cold and rather sardonic temperament, I could see that he had marked down the pretty Blue-Bell for himself, but her floutings and want of discipline jarred on him again and again, and made the sharp-edged nose quiver and shrink as from an east wind. I could see that it was with difficulty he could sustain himself on these occasions, and that he would have been glad to have entered at once on a lecture. However, she was submissive; and, when he told, or asked, or rather required, her to do something, obeyed him.

IV.

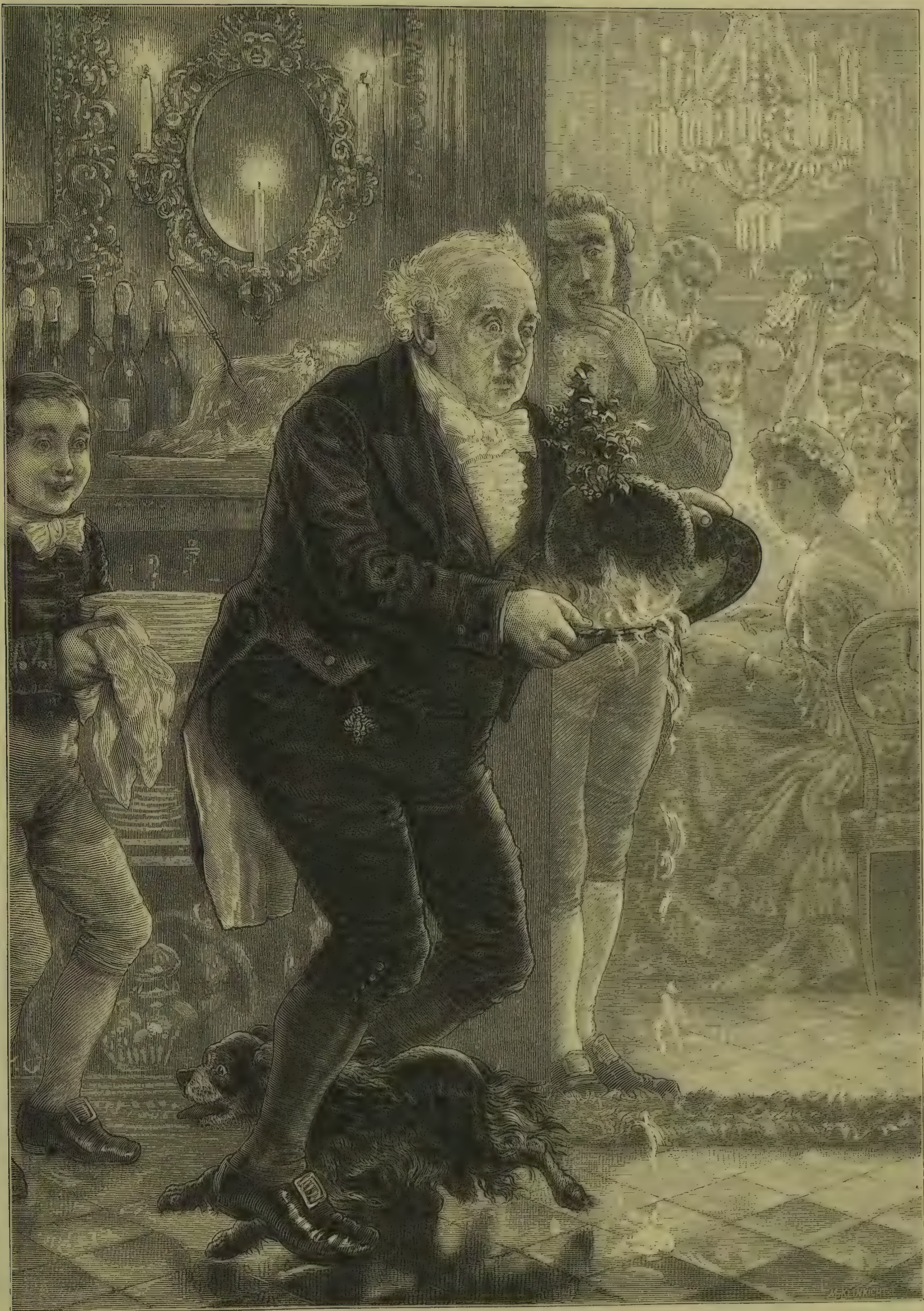
Among the varied company were two girls, Miss Beauforts, that quiet, interesting order of sisters, who fit symmetrically among the guests on such occasions, like the interchangeable portions of the watches made by machinery. They were what is called intellectual girls, and were really cultivated and entertaining. There were a number of young men, and some wise and mature "jackdaws," as they might be called, elderly bachelors, who said good things. But having long since bade adieu to flirtations and hopes of success with the fair, jokes and good wine and dinners were their joys now. With these Miss Blue Bell was quite at home, and with old Coke Robin (whose name lent itself to an obvious jest) in particular, a determined old joker. And thus there was nothing but laughter, and *persiflage*, and burlesque going on all day and night. I fancied at times that my grave ways may have furnished amusement; but the little lady tittered on every occasion. We had games of nights, at which she insisted on my being made the victim, to be "put out of the room," &c. At last I grew vexed with myself, and made myself a little remonstrance in these terms:—"You are, comparatively speaking, a goose, or, at least, preparing to develop into a fine Christian specimen. So be wise in time. There is no Darwinism to be contrived with character. Life is too short." And so very sensibly I dismissed the pretty but wayward Blue Bell from my thoughts—it cost me a wrench—and became as rational as ever. Nay, in the Beaufort sisters I found something more compatible. They had a great deal to say that was original and entertaining, though they had none of the quaint ways of the little heroine. I wondered, indeed, how I had overlooked this agreeable pair so long. Nay, they knew what I had written, and could bear examination in the same, if necessary—always a high kind of flattery for the author, though he may have uneasy misgivings as to its genuineness; and, in short, things became on a better footing. Little Blue Bell, however, could not conceal her scorn, and found a new delight in plaguing these two ladies, who, to their wonderment, found themselves to be the object of unpleasant hostility. In short, it was plain that there was to be but one little queen recognised in that house, to whom all must bow, or at least recognise no other.

Now, having come to a resolution to think no more of her, I was, besides, rather ashamed of my original weakness. For now I was able to assure myself that this was a very trifling description of object for one like me to have set my mind on; and that a philosophical personage ought to have approved of an article of a more solid character. Henceforth all her "ways" and devices were viewed in this light, and I became armed so strong in mine honesty that I came at last without affectation not to notice what she was doing. But her proceedings with the Colonel could certainly be called extravagant, almost outrageous, so that some of our prim ladies uttered, with eyes upthrown, one of the "damatory clauses" of their creed—"Upon my word!" While I—well, I could at least congratulate myself on the Spartan resolution carried out so successfully, and which had saved me from being distressed by her caprices. My time, too, had run out; and on the morrow I was to go back to grim, bald chambers in Lincoln's-Inn. I often determined never to go on visits on account of this unpleasant feeling of the return, which had the effect as though a van had come and carted away all the furniture of the modest rooms, they seemed so stripped and bare.

And one day, when there was an expedition to see some ruins, she and her companion returned when dinner had begun. It happened that there was a vacant place next to mine, which the truant had to take. She was not displeased at the



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THE PUDDING IN PERIL. BY CHARLES GREGORY.

position I could see: she would have an opportunity, as she fancied, of amusing herself with the somewhat "priggish" man to whom she had such a dislike.

She looked at me with a piquant defiance, as much as to say—

"Now, you see, I am independent! What have you to say to this last proceeding of mine, or dare even to look reprovingly at me at your peril!"

Instead, I asked her, naturally, about our expedition, and, with a very innocent air of curiosity, said I wondered how she could be so long over her toilette.

"I was with Colonel Labouchere," she said. "We stayed behind the rest of the party; and alone, too."

"Were you?" I said, smiling. "Happy Labouchere!"

"Now you are beginning to sneer," she said.

"Indeed, I am not," I said. "Instead, I should be congratulatory; should I not? Alas! that I should not see the dénouement. I am going back to my den to-morrow."

She was silent for a few moments; then began to speak in her grave way.

"What do you mean by the dénouement?"

I explained.

"I mean that you have a great admirer in the Colonel; and he seems to have—well—a great friend in you."

"So, that's your view. Well, as you are going, we must make up our quarrels; but you will forgive me for saying something?"

"Making up, and then going to utter one of your wicked little speeches! Out with it."

"Well," and she fell into a state of smiling hesitation. "You know, everyone says you are so clever and far-seeing, and all that. Well, I know I am a foolish girl; but I don't think you are quite so far-seeing as they say, or know human nature very well. But that's only my opinion."

And she looked at me with a curious side-glance, and her soft eyelids drooped; and she was perfectly right, though I did not see it then. For the rest of dinner she laid aside all her little tricks and devices, talking with great earnestness, so that I saw her in quite a new character. Then I noted that reserve of delicate tenderness that in her gentle soul betrayed a sensitive quivering of the upper lip, which now and then played like a pulse. Then, sitting beside her as I was, I noted the flowing lines of her form, the ear, and how elegant the little head was set on its support. We grew quite friendly and interested (I suppose), and at last I said,

"What a pity we had not this little talk earlier; I am sure we have had false ideas of each other."

"I know you have had of me," she answered quickly; "but my view of you is not changed."

Still, she was very charming. But all this time the sharp-nosed Colonel was staring at us, his cold and rather cruel eyes being scarcely ever turned from our quarter. "Ah! little coquette," I thought; "that is your game, is it—using me as a stimulant?"

That night the two intellectual young ladies claimed a promise I had made to show them some poem or passage (I seemed to myself highly priggish as I did so), and we were busily engaged in its discussion, when the little lady swept by in her most scornful manner. After that her behaviour with the Colonel became outrageous.

As I said, "Good-night and good-by!" she repeated the words in her prettily scoffing way; then added,

"You are not angry with me for remarking that you are not so acute as your friends say?—I mean, it is only I who think so."

"Very good of you to tell me," I said. "I must only try and improve myself."

The next morning, towards the cold blue dawn, I was driven away from the castle to catch an early train.

V.

An interval of two or three years followed, during which we met occasionally at parties, or the pretty head bent eagerly to me out of a carriage window as it flew past. These rare visions set me pondering, and, as it were, faintly blew the embers of the old fire, and the walls of the cell appeared more bare and dreary for sometime after. Once or twice, by chance, on entering a room at a dinner party, my first greeting was from the same bright face, bowing and bending so eagerly, and with the most expressive animation. Then we had very confidential talks, and I noticed when I mentioned the dark Colonel she laughed with pleasure, as though she liked to hear me speak of the matter.

"He is certainly very devoted. You think it is what is called 'a case,' don't you?"

"Well," I answered, "or something that ought to be one. The materials are there."

"You are such a sagacious person—you should know."

In this way we met and met again. And, indeed, I began to own to myself, as I sat at my long studies in the chambers, that there was in her a greater and more serious purpose than I had ever imagined. She might seem volatile; but high spirits, or rather high spirit, and tenderness, lent the charm of earnestness to all she did. Bright smiles and a sweet bonhomie are often thus unfairly interpreted, and inferiority finds a compensation in supposing a frivolous nature behind. And so I found myself thinking, and thinking again, of this interesting being. But, from all I heard and all I saw, it was plain that she was to be sacrificed to that Colonel. The moloch of fashion, which only regards what it calls a suitable alliance, had declared that it was a highly desirable thing. Lady Louisa was a priestess, and practised the *haute dévotion* of the culte. I was sorry, strange to say, to have discovered that the little heroine was of a more solid character than I had supposed. But there were years of what might be called "stone-breaking" before me—the actual making of the road I was to travel, and that road led an altogether different way. *Dixi*. I had said it. Such flowers were for those that could afford to walk in gardens of their own. So I wisely put all such thoughts aside. Such is the use of training and having oneself "in hand," as it is called.

VI.

The next autumn I was on a tour in Germany, and, passing by Frankfurt, put up at the old Römischer Hof, in that quaint town. Looking from the window, I saw a party of English lady and gentlemen sightseers stroll by; and, one of the gentlemen looking up, I started at recognising the razor-like nose and cold cod-eyes of Colonel Labouchere. He was describing, in his pedantic way, such objects as they passed, though everyone could see and describe for themselves what was pointed out. This vision caused me more excitement than was becoming a philosopher; but I said to myself it was simple curiosity, of course. Of course they had come in from the Hotel de l'Europe, Homburg. At this time it was in its highest vogue, overflowing with all that was brilliant and conspicuous in this world almost—the *Délivres*, in fact, of the Epicurean public. Why not from curiosity, spare a day to see this Capua? There would be something Boottian instead of philosophical in passing by such a place when so near. I laughed as I found these dishonest pleadings drifting

through my mind. "No," I said to myself, "let us be honest and fair, and know what we are doing. I wish to see if some agreeable people, that I like, are there."

This I said haughtily, as if quitting some pettifogging objector who thought he "had me" there.

So I went out to see Homburg. It was evening, about seven o'clock; and there were the delightful groves and Bosquets, the sounds of music coming through the trees, and the crowds seated in groups, with the great Temple of Play at the background. I had scarcely found myself in the midst of this gay scene when my eyes fell upon her. There she was, with her hat and flowers, more bright and brilliant than ever. She gave a start, and seemed to be glad; the business-like Lady Louisa—the strongest contrast to her daughter—welcoming me with cordiality, and giving her reason with the frankest candour—

"So glad you have come! We wanted someone that would be useful to us; and I know you are a good creature."

The nose of the Colonel quivered and grew even sharper with a sort of disgust.

It was impossible not to be captivated with her, and so I stayed on from day to day. The little heroine was in the greatest spirits; the mercurial air, the vigorous blasts that came from the great Taunus invigorated her pulses, and her eyes danced, full of vivacity and harmless malice. She was organising all manner of schemes and projects for "fun" and amusement. But I now saw plainly, with rather heavy heart, that matters were rapidly hurrying to a crisis, and that the assiduous Colonel was destined to gain his prize. The great match which the busy mother had been striving to compass for a son had been just brought about; indeed, it had been for this end that the visit to Homburg had been planned. The blow had been struck, the nail driven home; and, now that the work was done, there would be an eagerness to get home and clinch the nuptial bolt at St. George's, Hanover-square.

This brother was a mere boy, very like Blue Bell herself, and she seemed to doat on him. It was plain that she did not like the affair, which she looked on as a sacrifice; for the future bride was a fashionable, hollow-hearted girl. Indeed, little Blue Bell was almost vehement in her hostility. She knew there was no love in the business, and the pretty boy had confided to her his distaste at being thus dragged to the altar. The mother, who affected a sort of rough good-humour, and never allowed herself to be put out when carrying on her plans, would say to me, "Now, like a good fellow, take away Blue Bell. You are her friend. She thinks an awful deal of your sense. Oh, she does so look up to you! But you know I look only to the interest of my children; and poor little Algernon, who doesn't now know what is good for him, will bless me one of these days." I could not resist lending myself to this transparent "dodge," as it may be called, though I knew what it was expected I should do in return. And, after a weak and pitiful struggle with my pride, I would pusillanimously end in doing what was suggested.

She was, indeed, the frankest of women.

"Now, there's my child, Blue Bell, there, Mr. Eden," she would say to me, confidentially. "You see what she is—what a lovely creature! She ought to get the first match in England. But I don't want that. I must have her rich, with plenty of luxuries; for she's a little toy herself—a kind of ornament that should be put in a cushioned velvet case. No struggling or battle of life. That sort of nonsense would do for her. She's not made for it. Mr. Eden, you understand me. For I know a man of your great sense and judgment will see how the thing is. So, as for her marrying a poor man or a man of moderate means, as they call it," she added, with strong disgust, "a fellow that can just give her home, and meals, and clothes, and a beggarly carriage now and then, it's simply out of the question; and I won't have it."

"This is important news," I could not help saying, "and ought to be spread about far and near."

"Oh, now you are laughing at me! For shame! You, a clever man, to be amusing yourself at my expense! I tell you, though, she likes you. I can see that. There. She's passing the window now. Go out quick and join her. Make him jealous. I tell you to do it. You have my leave. Ha! ha!"

There she was, indeed. I could not resist the bidding of this curious lady, and, after a moment's hesitation, I went out.

O, those walks! How I recall them now, eight long years ago. She loved flowers, and that was the ready excuse. I found out gardens where such things were to be bought. To my surprise, I was rather faithful to my duty, though I put forward some feeble pleas in behalf of marriages of convenience. It never struck me how curious it was that the intriguing lady should take such trouble in a matter that was settled; for the lad was helpless in her hands, and the whole was as complete as though the parson had spoken the words. It was surprising that I did not see what she was at; for was I not a person of such sound sense and judgment?

My judgment and restraint! Where were they now? Time enough, I thought, to pick them up again when I got back to the bleak chambers. Meanwhile, it seemed all a delicious dream, and this delusive feeling took away the sense of responsibility. As I saw that she listened to all I said. Some infatuation led me on into putting hypothetical cases as to Colonel Labouchere and other admirers, while I would correct any hasty admission by some careless and indifferent speech, that made the soft eyes look at me with wonder. Yet at times I almost thought that she had some interest in me; and some of her speeches made me wonder not a little, and brought me to the verge of saying something rash. I noticed that her habitual volatile manner had given place to a soft shyness, a tender drooping of her eyes that was inexpressibly attractive. She did not attempt any of her little smart replies. There was one day that I noticed this look specially. I had said something marked about the mortification of being refused, and that if ever I came to be in the situation of liking a person, I would almost prefer the mortification of losing her to that of running such a risk.

She looked at me with that shy look: the soft eyes were turned away, and, in a low, calm voice, she said—I can hear her now—

"But such a person would be very stupid not to know beforehand if he were really liked."

Now, for a person of such sense and judgment, I own to have been very nearly tempted into saying something—well, of a responsive kind. But, instead, there was a dull and awkward silence, and then the stupid, stupid speech:

"Well, it would not be worth the risk, so I would leave it so."

"You, then," she said, a little vehemently, "I suppose, would like the lady to propose to you!"

She was naturally a little indignant. But I in my dulness did not yet understand. Still it made me wonder and speculate not a little.

When we returned on that day we found the manœuvring mamma a little excited, yet in high good humour.

"Here's a bit of news, my pet," she said. "The Colonel has gone off! He was here only half an hour ago in such a fume, and as bitter as gentian-root. He said you were a regular flirt, and that it was scarcely proper for you to be going out in this way by yourself."

Blue Bell looked highly delighted at all this; her bright eyes danced about, brimming over with mischief and laughter. "Well, now," continued the mamma significantly, "we must begin to pack up too. There's nothing more to be done. I have settled my dear boy in life; and this is very idling. And of course you (to me) go back to your books like a sensible man, as you are. Isn't it a shame for her to make the poor Colonel suffer as she does? But he has got the hook in his mouth still."

"Do you think so, mamma?" said she, delighted.

"Not a doubt of it. He'll make his proposal within a week. He's a very good man. 'Pon my word, I like to see such constancy," she added, plaintively. "And, do you know," she went on, "you ought to be very much obliged to your friend, Mr. Eden, for the aid he gave. I am, I know. You owe it all to him."

"How?" I said, astonished.

"Oh, yes," she went on; "you know you promised me you would make him jealous, eh? And very well you did it. Of course, I encouraged you. But I must say you did not want much encouragement. You did it right well."

And the manœuvring lady absolutely gave a sort of humorous wink at me in the enjoyment of her stratagem.

With all my good sense, I was so taken back and dumb-founded that I could not answer a word. Besides, I felt guilty enough; for had I not, for ends of my own, accepted, or seemed to accept, this pitiful rôle? But that face! The glowing indignation! The fair, transparent skin colouring with indignant red; the delicately-cut upper lip quivering and fluttering, as though the nerves were unstrung; and the glance of deep reproach in her soft eyes—these haunted me for long, as they haunt me now.

"See there! She's angry with you," said the mother, delighted. "Come, my child; he meant it all for your interest; indeed he did."

"But, you know perfectly well, Lady Louisa, that I never"—

But I had to stop.

"No; of course, you didn't," and she winked again.

Blue Bell, after this revelation of treachery, had turned from me, and quitted the room, as stately as a little queen.

Her mother laughed outright. "She's very angry with you. However, you must make it up with her before you go. Between you and me, Blue Bell is a dreadful little flirt. She lives on it; it's her food. I can't tell you how many sensible men, like yourself, she's treated in this way. But, now recollect, I warned you. Well, well; now we must go and pack."

VII.

That night was to be a very dismal one. I felt thoroughly ashamed and humiliated, and full of silent grief, when I thought of the quivering lip, and that delicate sensitiveness which had been so wounded. The next morning I made my way to the large mansion in the Kisseleff Strasse, where they lived. The little fairy figure was in the stone balcony, watering her flowers.

"May I come up?" I said.

She tried to frown, to look a little indignant; but, at last, she broke into a gentle smile. "What can you want? But how cruel it was of you!" she said, when I entered. "Such a plot! And I thought you were my friend."

"So I was! So I am!" I said, eagerly. "But you couldn't suppose that I acted in that way?"

"But you did! You were very treacherous, all the same. Heaven defend me from cold, sensible people, after this!"

"But," I said, "you won't believe me if I tell you that I did not behave, or mean to behave, as your mother says I did. I was so glad to get the opportunity of being with you; and you know—what a power you have."

A flush—was it of pleasure?—came into her cheeks. Then she shook her head.

"No, no; that won't do, now. It has given me a lesson, though. You have made me feel very sore here. I see what you are; and they were right in warning me against you. You were all this time watching me, I suppose, to pick up things to put in your books. But you might have chosen someone else. I wish you had. There. Mamma is coming; so say no more about it, please."

And mamma did come from the inner room, with the twinkle in her eye, as though she had anticipated and enjoyed the whole. She had a letter in her hand.

"Just what I said," she began. "The poor Colonel writes from Brussels in a wretched state. You have made the man miserable. Blue Bell, my pet, that little head of yours has a deal to answer for!"

I could see that the mobile lines of the pretty face could not remain fixed, but instinctively relapsed into a smile at the thought of this homage to her powers of mischief.

"But, now, I can't let you stop here," continued her mother. "We have all too much to do. So, my dear Mr. Eden, you won't mind my turning you out into the street, or sending you back to your books. But how clever you are! Didn't I say it, Blue Bell, only last night? You'll be one of the great men of the day, and I'll be coming to ask you for a place."

There was nothing for it now but to go. So I took my leave with such dignity as I could command. Blue Bell said good-by with a haughty toss of her head. But when I had gone a step or two she came to the door and said suddenly,

"Well, perhaps I was too cross. Good-by! There! Shall we not see you in town?"

The mamma had discreetly withdrawn. For there was nothing this curious personage enjoyed so much as having a long and indiscriminate train of admirers for her Blue Bell, at which she might hint obscurely to her friends. No matter of what kind or degree they might be, it was all "fish" for her. "Ah," she would say, "there was that poor man. My little Blue Bell did for him! Dying of love—had to quit the country and go to Algiers."

I was at first inexpressibly mortified at the part I had been made to play in this little drama, having been *joué*, as the French say, on all sides. So I chose to believe, though I had really only *joué* myself. But after a while, when suffering dreary imprisonment during the long, long day in the German railway carriage, a sense of desolation began to take possession of me. I painted myself in the blackest and most guilty colours—as the most heartless of beings, while the image of the little wounded glance kept rising before me. Then came the speculation, infinitely flattering, certainly—what if, in my stupidity, I had flung away a chance, a hope, which I might have profited by? All those little hints in the garden might be interpreted as pointing to one thing. What folly! However, it was at an end now, and *should* be at an end! There was a resolution, fixed, final, and determined. I should go back to the loved books—never again to be drawn away from them.

A month went by; and there arose a feeling of curiosity that was almost overpowering. It surely might be gratified without prejudice to the "fixed, final, and determined" resolution. But, no. I had lost my confidence in my "iron purpose," as I once used to style it, and wholesale sacrifice was the only cure. I should be a total abstainer, and would run no risk of being a mere occasional drinker.

One day word was brought me that my old friend Lady

Charlemagne was below in her carriage waiting to see me. I went down at once.

"I want you to come to my ball," she said. "I am bringing out my daughter Maud. All the clever people are coming."

"Then I have no business there," I said, impatiently; for I was sick of the word.

"No; you must come. There are people I want you to meet. Krudener, the German actor—and you can talk German so well!"

"Oh, if you want me to be useful, that's another matter."

"And I have a number of pretty people coming—a brilliant girl or two and some others."

"Very well," I said, "I shall certainly come and—talk German."

Thus did fate entangle me once more; for I need not say that theory of "total abstinence" broke down on the instant, and became contemptible when applied to actual experience. I went. It was always impossible to refuse Lady Charlemagne when she made a point of a thing, and she "made a point" of everything that she wanted to be done.

It was a most dazzling affair; and I was led to the German performer, and made to carry on this most embarrassing shape of colloquial intercourse—viz., conversation with a foreigner of whom you know nothing, and whom you have never seen before. We did pretty well, for he began at once on his "art" and its "subjectivity," which, he said, was "the key to the acting of our Shakspeare." We English never could or would understand it. We were too objective. There was Schlegel, for instance, &c.

It was a very brilliant ball, and Miss Maud was being exhibited with great effect. The room was decorated magnificently, and I heard everyone talking of the music, which was certainly enchanting. I looked on and saw the clever people pass by. The night wore on. It came to midnight—supper-time—one o'clock. I would go away. But here were some late arrivals from another ball, and—

What did I see afar off? The bright, eager face, shifting and flashing with eagerness as it turned from side to side in perpetual animation. So all attention wandered from the great Schlegel, and from the gruff tones of the actor, until at last, with a short "I beg your pardon!" I left him *planté* in the middle of a sentence. Not, however, to approach, or to repeat the old blunder—no; I had some wisdom left—but to pass by with a short and smiling greeting, en passant, as it were, hurrying on to meet some friends, who were of a visionary kind, as the reader will understand, and whom I was eager to join. Close by, was the razor-nosed Colonel. So the sagacity of the mamma, who was there in person, had not been at fault, and the offended truant had returned.

Little Blue Bell was talking with an extraordinary excitement and vivacity that night. She was eagerly hurrying to and fro on the arms of various partners. She passed me with a smiling and eager greeting, and an air of invitation, as much as to say, "Let us make it up!" But I was not to be, in vulgar parlance, "sold again."

"You here," I said; "this is a surprise!" Then she was gone.

I was just thinking that it was time to be thinking of going away, when I was attracted by some excited dancer near me saying to his partner,

"Yes; they are going to play the new waltz. It's perfectly divine. You never heard anything so melancholy, and it makes you feel so in spite of you. They are going to begin now."

"What is the name of it—do you know?"

"The 'Loved and Lost'—a German one."

I was wondering what sort of a measure could deserve such high praise, when the soft voice was beside me. She quitted the arm of her partner and bowed him off (he rushed to secure another for the ravishing waltz), and said to me,

"Oh! I want you to help me. Do give me some advice."

She was quite scared. In astonishment, I waited to hear.

"He is going to propose to me to-night. He is speaking to mamma now. What shall I do? I have no one to help me."

"But he is an excellent match, is he not? And surely you like him."

"I hate him!" with much energy. "It will kill me. I shall die. He is odious in every way. What am I to do?"

"But they will not force you to do what you don't like?"

"They will. I have no strength to resist them. Mamma says it is for my good, and she does what she likes. Oh, tell me what to do—something—anything!"

All this time the waltz was playing, rising and falling with a sort of ravishing measure that thrilled the very soul. I was listening to it as well as to her; for, like that soft music on the stage which accompanies the speech of an actor in a melodrama, I could see that the strain was in keeping with all she was saying. It had a strange effect; for I said, desperately,

"I know one resource—that is, if there was anyone you really cared for!"

Again the old shy, drooping look in her eyes!

The "dying fall" of the waltz here swelled again. It spoke for me, and seemed to suggest the very words. I spoke them; and the next moment I knew by the delicately quivering lip and the bright smile that that most faithful, affectionate little heart was mine. The crash of the "tutti," the cymbals pealed out, and the impetuous dancers swept by us in a tempestuous whirl.

VIII.

The musical tempest of that scene, however, was as nothing to what followed when the work of that night became known. The mamma threatened with something like ferocity. Had it been the old days of duelling, I should have had to encounter Colonel Labouchere on the field. As it was, the hurricane of vituperation and menaces that broke over the head of the hapless Blue Bell was enough to have bent her to the ground or swept her away. But she was the most true, gallant, constant, faithful little soul that could be conceived. She never faltered or drew back for an instant. She had now cast her lot, and would have faced a row of rifles in defence of the cause she had adopted. There was nothing to be done, then, as her mother well knew, but submit.

By the time the waltzing waltz was done, it had been all settled. It was in vain that the infuriated Lady Louisa tried to undo what had been done; the little lady was firm as a rock. She would carry it through in defiance of the world. It was useless opposing her, and at last a kind of helpless assent was given. Only the day before the marriage, said the mamma to me,

"Well, it's a bad business, but it can't be helped. Only I tell you this. You are taking her from where she would have every comfort and luxury. She can't do without these; you can't give them, and never will. If she suffers from this, on your head be it!"

These were ominous parting words, and they struck rather a chill to my heart, for there was a certain probability about the prophecy. However, there was the Blue Bell herself, so bright and gay, she seemed about to be a living refutation of the grim prophecy. Still it was with this maternal benediction that we commenced the new life.

Never was there such a brilliant débutante in that line.

She was like a bird, chirruping all day long. She brought vast sepulchral-looking boxes, with all her property therein contained; and these were hauled over to Paris, where we displayed ourselves on the Boulevards, and other public places; she, gleaming in the sultry summer's sun, arrayed in gauzes, and her delicate charms exciting the admiration of every Frenchman. Then we repaired to that little green oasis Spa, whence we finally returned to embark in the troubles of house-keeping and house furnishing. Then began that life of struggle which I often look back to ruefully, for we started with some pretence; and the burden became heavy on the "bread winner." However, it was all very delightful, and the little Blue Bell was charming—ever ready with her bright eyes, at least with her smile, when the laugh was not forthcoming; and we had junketings and expeditions of all kinds.

But by-and-by—that is, after a month or two—the old nature of the tenant of the chambers asserted itself. Schemes of advancement, ambitious views, began to open. There was "a spur" now, and there were chances of advancement, and gradually these prospects, becoming more and more tempting, entailed hard work and labour from morning till night. Thus, gradually, only little hurried snatches of companionship took the place of what had been nearly the whole day's entertainment. I was almost always "busy," or engrossed. There were now debts to be paid and money to be made to pay them. To these obligations the little lady, in her affectionate exuberance, had herself contributed, often presenting herself in some costly dress by way of "a surprise"—which it was in a different sense—when she would stand before me in delight, asking, "Well, do you like me? Are you pleased with me?" Who could be otherwise with her, even with such inconvenient conditions, for she had the most wonderful art of unconscious coaxing. But still, all the same, we sank deep in Madame Bouffoné's and her fellow-conspirators' books.

However, I toiled on. Then came a prospect of getting into a "fat" place; to secure which fresh labours and fresh absorption were necessary. Time became far too precious to be spent at home in the drawing-room in pleasant prattle, and so I was out and abroad one half of the day, and for the other buried in the study, and by no means to be interrupted. Blue Bell, after some poutings and tears, came at last ruefully to accept these new conditions. She had but few resources in herself, save to look pretty, to be loving, cheerful, or give a smile, which she had ever ready, and on every occasion to be produced at an instant's notice. I say she had nothing left but to remain in her room, look over her "things," then grow weary, and then wait patiently until the day was over and dinner-time came, when her holiday began. With that clear and delicate complexion and finely-cut outlines, she was delicate and had to watch for suitable days and seasons to go out. But she maintained she was really strong. Sometimes she made piteous protest. "I see so little of you, always shut up with your books. I am sure I might as well not be married at all." But though this gave me a twinge, it always seemed to me that life was long and labour short; and when the last was accomplished and the end gained, we would be able to revert to the old days and old happiness. Everything was going so well, that the goal was not so far off as might be supposed.

One day when I returned home the little lady came bounding down, her face beaming with delight.

"Do you know who has been here?" she cried. "Only just guess! You won't guess. My old friend, and your enemy, the wicked Colonel."

That was the name I always had for him.

I suppose I did not look gratified; but this only pleased her. He had been most kind and friendly, and expressed the greatest interest in myself; and, in short—

"He was so nice, and I pitied him so, that I thought, ducky! it would not harm to ask him to dine here to-day."

This I did not approve at all. I did not like the man—did not wish to see him; and, considering what had occurred, thought it most undesirable that he should come to our house. However, she was delighted with the idea, and in such spirits that I made no further objection, and the Colonel came.

It was rather awkward, our meeting; but, of course, more for him than for me. The sharp nose was sharper than ever, and was curled up as he entered; but he tried to be agreeable, and had a good store of anecdotes. And thus our little dinner passed off pretty well; but I registered a declaration that this pleasant intercourse should cease with the occasion. He thus proved, during the dinner, a much more rational being than I had supposed, being gentlemanly and having laid aside that propensity for "lecturing" which I had before noticed in him. However, I was as dry as I could possibly be to him, at some sacrifice of what was due to an invited guest; and under this trial, too, he behaved with a moderation and forbearance that, I fear, made his host appear to disadvantage. Little Blue Bell, at times, must have blushed for me; but had she not herself brought it on him? And I wished to give serious warning of the folly, and at the same time uselessness, of going against what the lord of the house had decreed. So, when he was gone, on her beginning, "Poor fellow! didn't you pity him?" I proceeded gravely to show the indiscreetness of the proceeding.

"Now, she said, 'you are going to be cross and to scold me. I am sure, with the solitary life I lead, it must be a relief for me to see somebody. I never see you. I want someone to talk to. If I could only see you,' &c."

"Well, then," I said, "only wait a little. As soon as we are clear of all our little difficulties, and have got into port, I promise you shall then see too much of me. Only have a little patience."

"Really and truly?" she said, her face lighting up."

"Really and truly."

"Then, that's all I want," she said, with a strange fervour. "Just to see you—to look at you!"

And in this declaration she was perfectly genuine. And such assurances were always accepted complacently and with an amiable gratification, as being no more than was due to one of the lords of the creation. The lines,

"O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,

and the rest, scarcely applied to her; for she was never "uncertain," and one smile was enough to chase away any little waywardness and make her happy for the day.

It was impossible to give an idea of her pretty ways, which were quite unstudied. I see her now, as she drives from the door in a hansom cab, giving a parting salute to the person she loved in the window, kissing hands with both hands: an almost Eastern fashion, and done with her whole heart. I see her, too, down in her kitchen, with the cook's apron on, and her little arms all floured, busy, à la Marie Wilton at the Prince of Wales's, making a pudding, in a little nervous flutter, her little musical laugh ringing out at every accident of the process. So, too, when she would go forth to shop, having a *penchant* for certain obscure but busy streets, where the worst goods were sold, but which she conceived to be incomparable bargains.

About three weeks went by, and one evening again I found her in a high state of excitement.

"Now," she said, "I have something to tell you. I know

you think that I am stupid, and can manage nothing; but I think to-day you will say I have done what you call a little stroke of business for you."

"What is it? Let us hear."

"You know Lord Grimston's interest, that you were so anxious about. I've secured it for you."

"No!" I exclaimed, in delight.

"Yes. He was here to-day, and he has promised to go down specially to settle it. He's his cousin, you know."

"Who?"

"Colonel Labouchere, of course."

"What! After all that I said to you! It's quite clear that you don't care the least for my wishes."

And, being really mortified and humiliated, I proceeded to get very angry, and with much heat declared that she was a perfect child, a simpleton, without any sense; I ought to employ a nurse to look after her—with other sarcastic remarks, which cut more deeply into her gentle heart than I had the least idea of.

"And I did all this for you, and this is my return," she said, deeply wounded. "I believe that he really liked me, and that you never did; and that mamma was right after all. You only care for your books," &c.

But I was not to be moved, and a letter was written to the Colonel coldly declining his valuable assistance, which, I believed, too, was not of the value that he supposed.

IX.

From the date of this declaration I frankly confess to feeling a sense of some little uneasiness. I disdained to own to myself that I could feel anything that seemed like jealousy. Grim and hideous word! Still, there had been a sort of resentful defiance in the tone in which the little woman had declared that "she would not be treated like a child." I did not understand her character, which was of this sort; but she could be "led" to do anything—would follow to a word, a smile, a kiss—but when attempted to be "driven" became impracticable. She was too high-spirited to answer whip and spur.

But now other matters intervened to drive this idea from my thoughts. We were "getting on" in the world. Our expenses increased; for the point had come when saving becomes a worse and almost fatal extravagance. I grew more and more absorbed; during the day, and until far into the evening could do little more than give a hurried nod and smile to the little woman. Soon it came to be that the walk must be given up—that which she most prized of all our enjoyments, and looked forward to during the whole day. At one time, indeed, in a newborn fit of method, she had purchased a diary, and with a new pen, and in her neatest writing, had made an entry, "Had a most delightful walk with him." And this was the only record she had made in the volume. But with these engrossing occupations every hour was precious; so the walks—even the Sunday one—had to be cut off. To this she gradually resigned herself. She was not strong, and could not pace vigorously to call on female friends and have good gossip with them; and the day was not yet come for our keeping a carriage. So she sat patiently within doors, reading, and being amused by such things as "The Family Monitor" and other periodicals of the kind. I never thought of these long solitary hours—or rather had scarcely time to do so. But I promised myself, as I often promised her, that, once we worked free of our little entanglements and the desired "place" had been secured, then we should really begin to live and enjoy life. Neither was it so far off now. Promises, at first airy and unsubstantial, had gradually been narrowed down to definite consistency and point: the little debts were melting away. It only wanted one of those long and strong pulls to get clear. It was now July, and, by an almost accurate calculation, I estimated that if the long and strong pull were continued, by the month of December we should be free and happy. How she delighted in the anticipation, smiling and chirruping with pleasure!

"And after that I shall really and truly"—a favourite phrase of hers, and she had a little "taste" of a lisp, which made it sound "weally and twooly"—"and after that I shall have you all to myself?"

"Beyond fail. I bind myself honourably."

"Ah! you know very well"—she would go on—"that one little look from you is all that I ever ask!"

The great feature in our lives was "THE PLACE." We talked of the place, fancied ourselves in the enjoyment of its emoluments, spent the same buying new bonnets, sealskins, and even thought of keeping a small yacht on it. By this it will be seen that we were of rather a hopeful turn, and shared the sanguine nature of the lady with the basket of eggs. A great man had promised faithfully that if the opportunity came he would "put in a word" for us; and he was such a great man that this word was better than another's bond. When or where this "word" was to be put in was a little indistinct; still, there was the promise. The present actual incumbent of the place was what is called "shakey," so we would probably not have long to wait.

We were journeying on thus steadily to the wished-for point when little Blue Bell, who was sadly incautious, and had but a frail chest, caught a slight cold, which led to a cough and to the visit of Sir Rufus Parker, the physician of fashion, who produced a dry smile on his crab-apple face, and, with his creaking voice and robin-redbreast head, gave pleasant warning that "we must take care, and not overdo it. No going to parties, or low dresses, for the present!" such speeches, with the pleasure of the attendance of the swinging carriage with the red or yellow wheels, amounting to the whole remedy and treatment these august practitioners can furnish. These formalities went on for some time, and little Blue Bell, would dress in her cap and invalid jacket for his visit, and was delighted with the charming man who came to see her. She appeared to grow better, and the great man was satisfied with the progress made, and said again, à la Robin Redbreast, that "we must take care, and not play tricks with ourselves. No *décolleté* business for the present." I was, of course, bamboozled, and inspired with due confidence; and so we settled that our pretty pet was growing better, and must get well. For had not Sir Rufus said so?

Again I became engrossed with my books, and "THE PLACE" was drawing nearer and yet nearer. Once we passed December, hey for universal holiday and junketing, and the "repose with dignity!" The little lady was down stairs, looking worn and tired; but the soft eyes were as bright and loving and slyly roguish as ever. Perhaps I fancied, indeed, that she was a little inclined to make too much of these things. But she was in great spirits. She had obtained a promise that we should make a brief little excursion in the summer, were it only for a fortnight, to the country. A year or two before, I had lighted on a little rural abode—only a few miles from London—a kind of Tudor cottage, kept by some homely folk, and nothing very magnificent in accommodation, but whose small windows up in the gable were overgrown with honeysuckles and green flowering plants. The two brief weeks spent here was the enchanting spot in her memory, and she was never weary of recurring to those happy, rustic days. Well, we should go there once more; "and there," she says, "I shall



AN ANXIOUS HEART. BY F. G. COTMAN.
(SEE "STEERING FOR HOME.")



STEERING FOR HOME. BY HORACE PETHERICK.

have you all to myself." The anticipations were boundless. So, setting off one morning to engage it, I found, to my dismay, that the homely folk had gone, that the house had been half-pulled down, enlarged, rebuilt, and was now an opulent citizen's villa. I recall her little face so blank at this cruel news, which seemed to destroy, as it were, the old association itself. She did not care to go anywhere else, and so we remained where we were, and I was ready to accept her ready excuse that "it would do later."

X.

About this time a great lady gave a ball, to which it was difficult to secure an invitation, and for which an influential friend, who took an affectionate interest in Blue Bell and her ways, sent us an invitation. I considered it so much a matter of course that she would not go that I made no remark on the subject, beyond saying that it was very good-natured of the lady. It was, besides, a long way off. At the moment, indeed, Blue Bell herself had not an idea of such a thing, and looked wistfully at the card.

"What fun it would be," she said; "and how I should like to be there!" But *that* was out of the question.

Again, the press of business was growing very strong and absorbing, and the "friends at court" were more and more encouraging as to prospects. So, of course, I worked on with enthusiasm, and, as it were, "put off" my sweet pet and all her ways to the happy time that was coming—when, in shorter and more prosaic phrase, I should be able to attend to her.

With the same view and the same hope, she bore her gloomy detention in the little room above, the long weary days going by tediously. It was now the end of October, and the fogs of November were at hand, so there were days when she was not to be allowed out; yet she bore it all cheerfully, and was always ready with her greeting smile.

It was one evening towards the close of the week when I was hurrying home from business to take up other business waiting for me, when in the shadow I saw the figure of a gentleman come out of our house, and, after stopping a hansom cab, get in and drive away. This gave me time to approach, and then I made him out distinctly. It was the intrusive Colonel. There was not much in such an apparition; but still it gave me the renewal of uncomfortable feelings: for Blue Bell had grown a little lazy in seeing people, and found the trouble of going down to talk to visitors too much. The *conscience* latterly had been, "Not at home!" However, I came to a gallant resolution. I must not be "cross," or "worry" her. So I would try and look indifferent, or even pleased, if I could, when she would tell me all that passed. She had been an invalid, and was not strong.

Down she came to dinner, for which she always dressed as though there were two or three guests to arrive—the little coquettish cap and the tiny frill, out of which her delicate neck emerged with a curve like that of the stalk of a graceful flower, and of which she consumed some hundreds of yards in the year; for she knew the effect on the one she loved, and for whom were all these pains taken. Down she came, I say, and in a little flutter. But not one word did she say of the visitor! This seemed strange. However, true to my resolution, I made no remark. But when I went to the study, it furnished food for unpleasant thought. I at last supplied myself with an explanation. She knew that "I would be making a fuss; that I would not understand, &c." So it was better to say nothing about it. This was hardly satisfactory, but it was the best that could be offered.

Three or four days later an idea struck me, when I was out "on business," but which I may have been a little ashamed of—viz., to return home at an unexpected time; that is, towards the middle of the day. As I left myself in I saw there was a letter in the letter-box, which I found was directed to her, and had a good-sized "L" on the envelope. This made me start. For a moment the temptation came on me to—; but I forbore. No; I would not make it too serious, but would wait and see how things would turn out, and even *watch*, if you will.

That evening again not an allusion to the letter; but the little lady was rather gloomy and "put out," and she spoke very little. As I turned these things over, determined all the while not to be suspicious, some warnings of her mother came back on me. "Don't think of looking her up or doing the grim growl, for Blue Bell won't stand it. She's too high-spirited for that. If you try it, mark my words, she'll give you the slip." I had laughed at this notion of the old matron, but it now seemed to me, of a sudden, to have a strange sense of probability.

When I saw her again she was full of eagerness and excitement.

"It's very dull," she said, "being shut up here. I wish I had some little amusement. You know it's very hard."

"What would you like?" I said. "Have you no visitors?"

"Oh, I should like to go out to parties. Everyone is going to this ball."

"That," I said, "you may put out of your head. It would be sheer insanity. Mind!" I added, with assumed sternness, "I am determined on that, for your own sake. Why do you want to go?"

"Oh, I want to go. I like to go. I have a reason."

I thought of this for long afterwards. Why should she wish to go, and take this sudden fancy of being at the ball? Some way, I associated it indistinctly with that *blue* of a Colonel, whose image I perpetually conjured up as throwing out artful hints which would quite suit her impulsive character, making her think, perhaps, that she was aggrieved and neglected. Why I associated such devices with him I know not; for, as I have said, he had impressed me favourably, and seemed to have accepted his defeat in a plain and straightforward way.

All this, however, led to a certain reserve on my side, which seemed to wound that gentle little heart, as though she could not understand what grounds there were for this change in me.

"Don't be cross to me. Now, you are not going to be cross to me." But I remained, if not "cross," at least grim and moody.

Suddenly there came news as to "THE PLACE." One morning, as my eye fell on the black list in the *Times*, I saw in it the name of my patron, my sheet-anchor, the fountain whence was to flow the long-hoped-for, long-expected honour. At this cruel disappointment, which destroyed the artful labour of years as a gale sweeps away in a night so many hundred feet of a pier that has taken months to make, I almost sank into despair. Little Blue Bell was at hand, and took it in her light, airy way.

"How unfortunate!" she said; "but it may not be as bad as you think. You are certainly unlucky."

This little speech made me lose patience.

"You care very little," I said, bitterly. "You have no anxiety or responsibility. You don't feel these things, for you haven't to face the difficulties."

I saw the tears come into her soft eyes. I never could resist those tears. She only repeated,

"It may not be as bad as you think. And now, don't be

cross," in her most pleading tone. Ever was she thus tender and gentle. So I dismissed the Colonel from my thoughts.

But it was a sore thing thus to have to begin again—to lay a new train—spread fresh nets. As I said to her, rather bitterly, all our dream of repose was now at an end, and that I foresaw clearly I was to be a drudge all my life. The sense of disappointment was too much for me, and it was long before I rallied. In this desponding state I sometimes forsook "my Sweet," though now I used to call her "my Bitter," and used to go and dine at the club, more to have an opportunity of brooding over my ill-luck than for seeking sustenance. Perhaps I thought that the little woman treated the matter too much with a "light heart," and was not made to be troubled with the buffets of fortune.

On one night, in this low state, I thus repaired to the club, remained there a little late, conning over the disheartening question, How was I, as it were, to begin life again? and, arriving at no solution, proceeded home moodily. It was about eleven o'clock, and I went up, according to time-honoured and never-infringed-upon custom, to see my little woman and have a few moments' talk. The maid was a little embarrassed.

"Please, Sir, the mistress has gone to the ball."

"Gone to the ball!"

I could only repeat her phrase. I was struck as of a heap; for in her the act signified far more than in another, and was even portentous. I felt a sort of chill at my heart. There was a mad folly joined to the disobedience; for there was a bitter, cutting east wind abroad, a single stab of which was enough to bring death to a delicate chest.

It was really a stunning blow—the defiance from one whose whole *raison d'être* was love and dependence, and complete self-abnegation for that love. The worst was, that behind I could see the shadow of that ill-omened figure, the Colonel. Yet I was not angry, but I deplored the cruel wrecking of what I had so foolishly fancied would stand for ever—namely, that sweet and tender devotion. Then the sardonic speech of her mother recurred to me—

"Mind my warning. Blue Bell must be led, not driven; or, one of these days, she'll play you a trick."

And here was one of these days, and here was the trick played.

I sat up late that night, and heard one and two strike, until at last nervous shadows of even some worse catastrophe began to darken my disordered imagination. Then the carriage stopped at the door. I was preparing a silent and reproachful reception, a stern "Not a word on the subject to-night, we'll talk of this in the morning."

When, on the door being opened, the east wind whistled in through the hall, and with it entered and stood before me a brilliant little vision of beauty, glittering with jewels, and diamonds sparkling on her snowy neck, and flowers setting off her hair. The bright creature stood smiling and "chirruping" at the door, conscious of the effect; and, in a tumult of delight at the result, made her old speech, looking down at her neck, smiling and laughing—

"Do you like me? Are you pleased with me?"

Before I could reply she poured out all these speeches—"Am I a foolish little thing? Do I want ballast, as you say? Am I a child that will never get through the world? Answer me all that first, before I tell you a single thing."

I sighed, and smiled as I sighed:

"It is no use being angry. Ah! but why did you go against my wishes in such a way?"

"I told you that I had a reason for going. Oh, such a reason. Wait until you hear it."

"I don't care about it now. But I will forgive you all, especially for your looking so pretty."

Her face lit up with uncontrolled delight.

"You think that? You're not joking? You think that I look well—you are proud of me?"

"It's no use denying it," I said, still sighing. "You will always be a little plague, but I love you all the same, because I believe you love me. Only tell me this: but that couldn't have been—wasn't there—that man?"

"To be sure he was. I wouldn't have gone if he hadn't been there."

Here I grew a little angry.

"If I thought that!"

"Ah," she said, with an inexpressible abandon. "But I can't carry it on longer. We've got it—the place; and I went to get it! And it's all been a regular plot, at which I have been working for a long time. But the place is yours; and now, darling—darling, we're to be happy at last, really and truly!"

It was, as she said. Since the day of the disappointment she had been planning and planning, and had taken her old friend into confidence. He was well acquainted with the successor of the Lord that had died so inopportunist, and introduced Blue Bell to him. She used her little stock of captivating arts so successfully that on the night of the ball she succeeded in obtaining the promise. The only drawback was that the good-natured Labouchere—not so black as I had painted him—was going away to the East, perhaps never to return. The place was mine—ours!

XL.

But at what a terrible cost. I close my eyes and turn away. Oh, faithful, constant, gallant, true-hearted, loving little soul! Her breath of life, I do believe, was the breath that I drew. But the cutting east wind of that night, finished the work that had begun imperceptibly long before. I dare not dwell on these closing scenes. Save that I will not shut out the vision of the sweet little figure, propped up with pillows, her favourite dainty little cap and blue ribbons, and blue lace carefully put on to the last, and all for me! One little whisper of hers was more touching than anything that has ever found its way into a novel. To my saying that I had worried and harried her gentle little soul sadly, but that a look was enough to bring her to me, no matter how cross I had been, she said softly, but fervently, *I could not help it, I was so fond of you.*

Sweet, gallant, loyal, tender little soul! True to the death! So she faded out of this cruel life, leaving a cold, aching blank behind her.

The Waltz was still rising and falling in that old entrancing and ravishing measure. The whirling dancers were indefatigable.

"You are not listening to me," said Lady Charlemagne. "You have not heard one word I have been saying. Now, now," she added with a warning voice, "you promised me, recollect! You must turn away your thoughts from the past, and try and forget. It's three years ago."

"It was that waltz," I said, with a rather faltering voice.

"It brought it all back. It was played one night, when—"

"I know. We won't think of it any more. They say the associations of pathetic music are stronger than anything else. There! I give me your arm, and we'll go down to supper. Good gracious! it's broad daylight!"

And we quitted the room slowly, pursued by that wild strain, with its dying fall of the "Loved and Lost" Waltz.—

It seemed the Requiem of little Blue Bell!

A DRESS REHEARSAL.

(See Illustration at page 12.)

The vocation of catering for popular amusement embraces a wide variety of conditions in life. One of the queerest is that of a poor travelling showman of clever performing dogs. He journeys on foot along the weary road from a village to a market town, accompanied, in the case we see, by a fair-haired little daughter, who will take care of the animals while he just steps into a public-house for half a pint; and she will hold a tray for coppers, among the pleased circle of spectators, when Caesar and Prince have exhibited their wonderful tricks. The dogs would be apt to forget such rare accomplishments, in their long days of travel on the common highway, but that a private rehearsal is frequently held, in some leisure hour of morning or evening, at the place where this odd little company happen to lodge for the night. They get unobserved into a quiet corner of the barn, where they slept. The man sits down, in his characteristic dress of threadbare coat buttoned up close to hide the want of a shirt; conspicuous white hat, sadly battered, with broad mourning band of rusty black; and leather gaiters, fit for the muddest tramp. The poor fellow, who may have no worse fault than liking a glass and a pipe, and whom we might find both civil and honest, was once perhaps an industrious journeyman in some known handicraft, which has failed to support him through a change of fashion in the trade. He would prefer, as well for his own sake as for his little girl's, whose mother he buried at Gloucester four years ago, that he should be enabled to lead a more regular life, but there is no work in his line to be got in London, or in any of the great cities. And so it has come to pass that he now turns to account, for a precarious livelihood, the experience in dog-training which he once gained or improved by playful efforts to divert his child in her infancy, and for which he used to be rewarded by his wife's approving smile.

His instruments of artificial sound, which it were profanity to call music, are yet sufficient to attract the rustic audience, and to enliven the canine performers. A small drum beaten with one stick, and a set of Pandean pipes sixed within easy reach of his puffing lips, make such a combination of changeable noises as cannot at least be mistaken for anything in nature. The girl has, in the mean time, attired both her four-footed comrades in the quaint costume of their public appearance. There is a laced frock-coat and military shako for the valiant spaniel who can do the musket exercise; while Prince, who can select the five of diamonds from amongst the cards of both colours laid down in a ring, wears a cap and frill of Sally's own making. With such a wardrobe and stock of theatrical properties, the rehearsal is soon arranged; and the stage manager, who is at the same time a whole orchestra, directs the chief performer, in the act of mimic soldiery, to a repetition of manoeuvres often before applauded. The man's face, with that droll squint and twist of the mouth, is far more comical than the laboured exertions of the dog, anxiously watching the signals of a raised forefinger, and dreading a harsh word or stroke of punishment. Yet we cannot but feel sorry for the need which has reduced this ingenious fellow to such a paltry employment, and still more do we regret the situation of that bright little maiden, doomed to consort with vagabonds and to become prematurely acquainted with strange forms of evil. There is one spectator of the rehearsal, indeed, whose opinion might be worthy of some attention, if he would condescend to declare it. He contents himself at present with silently looking on; we know not what he thinks of the exhibition. The gravity of demeanour which is, upon such an occasion, invariably displayed by an ass should instruct us that "there are more things in heaven and earth," as Shakespeare has it, "than are dreamt of in our philosophy." Nobody knows how much a donkey knows, and, if he be as wise as he looks, then it would indeed be well for any of us to be half so wise as he. "He—he—he-haw, he-haw!" is a better speech, with less mischievous nonsense and falsehood in it, than many a human oration. The dogs too, when off duty at the end of this Dress Rehearsal, will have something to say; and "Bow, wow!" is an eloquent exclamation to the ear that knows their language.

ENGAGED.

(See Illustration at page 9.)

Engaged? But how? For some round dance?

Gallop or waltz? To flirt the while?

Quick-darting many a Parthian glance?

On swains enraptured by her smile?

Or has some daring lover found

An opportunity to dun her?

Her heart audaciously to sound?

And, boldly wooing, fairly won her?

If one may judge from Edith's face,

The latter is the truer guess:

A proud content you there may trace,

Enhancing her rare loveliness;

As though an epoch in her life

Had come and glorified her beauty.

And will our Edith be a wife?

And will she straight conform to duty?

Proud Edith, with the haughty will;

That stately damsel, so exacting,

Who never felt one fluttering thrill,

While yet all other hearts distracting,

So the world thought, and then with truth;

But Love has shown his mighty power;

Her heart, that knew no tender ruth,

Is flooded now with passion's dower;

And all is changed; her mocking pride

Is melted as the last year's snow;

Her fine, grand airs are thrown aside—

And lo, a gracious mood below!

So oft a landscape may be seen,

In frost a fair but lifeless thing,

Bedecked itself in living green.

At the first kindling touch of spring,

Her soul, expanding every side,

New hopes and nobler thoughts engage;

For, borne aloft on love's spring-tide,

She gains a larger heritage;

And, from her new-found altitude

Sees life's great purpose truer, clearer;

And, better, in this purer mood,

Feels all things tenderer and dearer.

She takes a poem from her shelves,

And reads strange writing 'twixt the lines;

Nay, from the very lines themselves

To her new sense new meaning shines.

Her heart, refreshed by hidden springs,

Their laughing waters gaily flinging,

Throws like a bird that tries its wings,

And bursts impromptu into singing.—J. L.

MR. STREETER, JEWELLER.

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Which the emerald nooks adorn;
Sweet as rosebuds bursting forth,
From the richly-laden earth,
Is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."
The teeth it makes a pearly white,
So pure and lovely to the sight;
The gums assume a rosy hue,
The breath is sweet as violet blue;
While scented as the flowers of May,
Which cast their sweetness from each spray,
Is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."
Sure, some fairy with its hand
Cast around its mystic wand,
And produced from fairy's bower
Scented perfumes from each flower;
For in this liquid gem we trace—
All that can beaute and grace—
Such is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

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"Where are you going, my Pretty Maid?"

Where are you going, my pretty maid?
I'm going a-milking, Sir, she said.
Shall I come with you, my pretty maid?
Oh, yes, if you please, kind Sir, she said.

What is your father, my pretty maid?
My father's a farmer, Sir, she said.
Shall I now marry you, my pretty maid?
Oh, yes, if you please, kind Sir, she said.

What is your fortune, my pretty maid?
My face is my fortune, Sir, she said.
Then I can't marry you, my pretty maid.
Nobody axed you, Sir, she said.

These verses of a pleasant old English song are no unsuitable commentary upon the very agreeable subject of Mr. Luke Fildes's picture. Mr. Fildes has here given us something more pleasant to look upon than his "Casuals" and his "Widower." Though the last-named pictures are two of the most powerful productions of modern art, they are by no means faultless; but they bear such thorough testimony to the artist's ability that his friends may fairly prophesy for him a brilliant career. Few young artists have so soon made their mark as Mr. Fildes; and we are glad to welcome, in his pretty Milkmaid, fresh evidence of his versatility. The innocent question is so naturally asked,

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Beyond this point of their conversation it is hardly necessary to follow the pair; but we remark with satisfaction that the girl is quite well able to take her own part, and not at all likely to be imposed upon, or deluded in any way whatever. Her face being her fortune, as she honestly declares, we cannot think her badly off for wealth of that excellent kind, very portable and presentable, readily negotiable in the market of social goodwill, and particularly valuable, if ever she chose such an investment, in the purchase of an eligible husband. But what man of her acquaintance is likely to be offered such a price for his hand and his surname, or who shall be privileged to lead her, a blushing bride, to the altar of the village church?

Nobody axed you, Sir, she said.

Well said, my pretty maid! Our turn is yet to come, if hand and heart be still free to give.

The original picture, bearing the title "Betty," was in last year's Royal Academy Exhibition, and was afterwards exhibited in the fine-art galleries of Mr. A. M. Marsden, King-street, St. James's.

THE PUDDING IN PERIL.

"Blessed pudding!" says Iago—but contemptuously, as one exclaiming "Fiddlestick!" Indeed, just before, he had ejaculated, "Blessed fig's-end!" For what should such a rogue know of our "blessed pudding,"—the grandest, choicest item in our Christmas fare? Nay, it is to be feared that the great poet himself who gave Iago being was but indifferently informed upon the subject. Strange that so noble and thorough an Englishman as William Shakespeare should never have tasted plum-pudding! But, in Elizabethan times, the world was content with plum-porridge; the cooks and housewives of the period had not yet discovered the worthier dish. Gradually, however, just as the British Constitution itself took form and acquired substance and developed into its present condition of compact solidity, so, from a chaos of "sweet soup with plums in it," did the great British pudding grow up into strength and firmness and imposing rotund proportions. Be sure it was not contrived of a sudden—it was no upstart, abrupt, extemporaneous invention. But, as the years went by, now this dainty was added to the compound, and now that, until, lo! the Christmas pudding was absolutely complete. A taper to set the spirit blazing—"light and spirits will become it well," as Master Page says of the night in Windsor Park—and then, adorned with a snowy crest of powdered sugar and a plume of red-berried holly, the Christmas pudding flames upon the board—a palpable, fragrant, edible realisation of "sweetness and light."

But there are slips between cups and lips—between puddings and their consumers. The dish that should be the crown of the banquet may topple, as crowns will sometimes. The end of the feast may prove to be as the beginning of a fray. A dog upon a racecourse has tried patience before now; a dog, when three courses and a dessert are in progress, may produce a grave catastrophe. The bearer of the glorious fare, oppressed by a sense of his responsibilities, may falter, may be tripped up by an unforeseen accident—"it is always the unforeseen that happens," quoth my Lord Beaconsfield—may fall himself, and, worse still, let the pudding tumble. The great Christmas globe itself dissolved, leaving but a wreck behind; the pudding turned back, as it were, into its embryonic state, no more recognisable as a pudding, but decomposed into its incoherent parent, plum-porridge, what gloom would weigh down the guests, what remorse would afflict the bosom of the luckless and self-accusing butler, what oburgations would be hurled at the four-footed cause of the disaster, what portentous misfortunes the future would seem to have in store! It may not be thought of. Be sure the fire-dropping pudding does but totter, and does not really fall. A little sleight-of-hand—a turn of the wrist—and it regains its menaced equilibrium. The glory of the Christmas dinner is secured. There has been excitement, suspense, alarm; there is now relief—congratulation. Host and hostess, guests and attendants, all breathe more freely. The pudding is duly sliced and distributed, and another Christmas dinner has come to a successful close.

DUTTON COOK.

A DREAM OF PLUM-PUDDING.

A REAL CHRISTMAS PUZZLE.

Being a few Nightmare notes on Mr. E. L. S.'s picture.

A carriage-and-pair drove up to my door in B—e-square. In a second the portal was flung up by one of four powdered but faithful lacqueys who adorn my front vestibule. (Learned Note.—Derivation of "vestibule" is "the bule (old Saxon word), where you leave your vest." Vest being short for vestment. The vestment originally went down to the heels. It applies nowadays to the knee-plus-ulster. To continue this antiquarian note any further would be out of place. I will therefore defer it for some future occasion, when we all feel more like it, as the Yankees say, bless 'em. Its Christmas time, and a hearty time, so I just throw in "bless 'em" to be seasonable. The Editor of the *Illus*—well, let us say the *Illustrious News*, so as not to be too personal (for this is in confidence)—stepped out, and stepped in. He was ushered into my Court of Lions, with its fountains and flowers, and fragrant with aromatically-scented air, so dear to my friends,—and to myself when Spicer's bill comes in. But what of that? A mere bagatelle, as the celebrated Guillaume observed when somebody hinted that if he didn't shoot the pippin he might kill the boy. Whereupon the ready William replied, in his Franco-Swiss dialect, "*Mon cher*, if I do bag the boy, it will be a mere *bag-a-telle*." I believe this to be authentic. But who cares? Bless us all, and make us good, honest, and loving hearts at Christmas! (I must be seasonable, I can't help it). I've a mind to stand on my balcony and say it *urbi et orbi* to the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker,—I never employed such a person in my life—when they appear at my door on Boxing Day. They will come like shadows—so depart. Bless 'em all! But to resume)—and shown through the noble suite of apartments, fitted up with all the barbaric splendour of the Russian Ambassador's mansion round the corner. Thence through various rooms which I need not here stop to describe particularly, to my *sanctum*. By-the-way, what an inappropriate term to apply to any study, or library—mine, especially—unless *sanctum* may be taken to mean the room that I have it *wholly* to myself. Perhaps so; well, anyhow, bless it! Let us sit round the fireside, say "Bless it!" whatever it is, and be seasonable. At this time of year let us not be reasonable, but seasonable. Bless us all!

I was seated in my brocaded silk wrapper when the eminent arrivalist (why not "arrivalist," if "revivalist" is permitted?) was announced.

In another five minutes he was seated on one of my damask (I don't like this word "damask" at Christmas; let us substitute, therefore, one of my "Blessask") couches, and was saying "Sir" to me ("Sir to you, Sir," I replied, "and Sir to you, Sir, after that," just to *entamer* the conversation and be sociable, genial, and once more seasonable), "I am in a difficulty."

I opened my secret drawer and took out a rouleau of notes. He waved his hand. Perhaps he didn't believe in them. Yet Messrs. Von Humbug and Bogus, the great Rotterdam—I mean Rotterdam—merchants, will cash my note of hand to any amount.

"Bah, Sir!" he replied with a radiant smile, "I have but to clap my hands, and a thousand ebon slaves!"

"Don't!" I ejaculated. "Don't! My room, though large, won't hold the number, that is, if you went on clapping your hands to any extent."

Then I took up the running.

"Sir," said I, "I am a plain man."

"You are," he interrupted, pleasantly.

I bowed. But for a less cynical remark I have hit a smaller man than myself over the head with a bootjack, and made him apologise on his knees. However, this is Christmas, and—"let us be seasonable," I said to myself. Then, aloud, I merely observed (genially, of course), "Bless you!"

"I come to you," my Illustrious Visitor began, "to help me."

I bowed. I could not do more, except to bow again.

"How?" I asked.

"Write something really Christmassy. Everybody is sending me scientific or instructive articles. Everybody is sending me stories with a purpose; and as for political romances, I'm up to my eyes in them. Now, Sir, from You I want something seasonable."

"I've an original idea," I said, starting up, and throwing back my long hair, like Mr. Irving in *Mac Bells*.

"No!" cried my Illustrious Visitor, aghast, and reeling in his chair.

"I have. Listen!"

He listened. We both listened.

"Speak, I charge thee, speak!" cried the Editor.

I pointed out to him the inappropriateness of his quotation, and then I gave him my original idea. "Why not," said I, grandly—"why not have a picture of Father Christmas giving toys to children from a real Christmas-tree?" *It's never been done. Eh?*

I shall never forget his Illustrious face when I made this proposition.

It beamed again. I had never seen it beam before; but it beamed again.

"I think," he remarked mildly, and more to himself than to me—"I think I've seen that somewhere before?"

"Never!" I exclaimed, boldly. "Never! I will stake my love and plighted troth upon it—never! What! I went on—"has anyone ever been so original as to be struck by such a notion? Don't tell me. This idea is *new*."

"You are quite sure?" said the Editor hesitatingly; "because, you see, I have in my time brought out some thousands of Christmas annuals"—I stopped him. I started back.

"Some thousands!!! Bless us!! Whom have I the honour of addressing? Are you the inventor of that old-world jest about Cain 'Taking A-bel's life' as the first newspaper subscriber? Thousands! How old is the world? Who made the first joke? Who said the first 'good thing'? Who repeated it? Did they know everything at Nineveh? Were railways and speculations in existence? What was the price of Pyramids? Did they go up one day and down the next on the Ninevite Stock Exchange? Was a Great Babylonian Loan issued at 70, and who was the Great Babylonian? Say, Sir, you who have brought out thousands of annuals, do you remember the first shower of rain, and, on that occasion, were you provided with an umbrella?"

"You misunderstand me," he replied, gently. "Everybody, I think, misunderstands me about Christmas. But it will be all right. The Number, the Extra Number, will be all right. I will think over your notion of an Illustration of Father Christmas—perhaps it is novel—perhaps it isn't. But in the mean time turn your attention to the paper I leave with you. Farewell."

"Say, Bless you," I implored.

"Bless you," came back the echo of a departing voice.

He was gone. Gone like a beautiful dream. The footmen slumbered in the hall. The lacqueys reposed in the vestibule. None had seen him pass out. What mystery was this? Was

it a reality? or not? Yes, a reality, for on the carpet was a bank-note for one thousand sovereigns, with a memorandum pinned on at the side, "When this you see, remember me! Something Christmassy!"

Ere I had time to change the flimsy and spend it on jewellery for the poor, I noticed, lying hard by the precious billet, a paper folded. It was to this he had alluded.

To unfold it, to place it on my table, to examine it closely, was the work of a minute.

It was a picture. Some writing in the corner informed me it was by that talented master of woodcraft, E. L. Sambourne. To this writing, in the corner, was added, *Invit et del*—which struck me, as it will everybody, as peculiarly happy and Christmassy. Evidently *E. L. S. invit et del* means that E. L. S. invites me to dinner, and delighted to have the opportunity of doing so.

This is what the Illustrious Magician meant. This is the Christmassy idea. Bless him! "I am," I said to myself—"I see it now—I am to write something appropriate to this picture."

As I have said, to spread the admirably-executed, cunningly-designed picture, and to accept the talented artist's invitation to dinner, were both the work of a moment.

To understand what the—bless us!—the picture meant was the work of four hours and a half, and then I hadn't exhausted the subject—on the contrary, the subject had exhausted me.

It was absolutely necessary that I should accept the invitation. * * * I pass the interval over with *asterisks*—that is, *stars*. For was it not at night we met? Was it not with the first glimmer of the morning star we parted? And as I slid down the doorstep, and reclined on the pavement in deep thought, I heard the eminent artist's voice somewhere, above me, saying,

"Rec'lect—boy's dream—plum-pudd'n!"

Then I heard howls and barks. The artistic Genius had locked himself out, left the key inside, and the dogs were barking at him for a burglar.

But I came away inspired. I knew what the picture meant. I knew that this Illustration, which does now in this Paper delight the eyes of numberless children, old and young, must be taken to mean a "Boy's Dream of Plum-Pudding."

Well; but how to write about it? How to illustrate the Illustration?

Why has that boy been reading the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Arctic Exploration*? Why, what a studious boy he must have been until he fell in with Plum-Pudding.

That he should dream of a clown is natural; but why a man up above trying to catch a bear among the penny icebergs! Then here comes round the corner a mad, raging bison from a primordial forest of Christmas-Trees; and a fox, or a dog, or a foxdog, or a dogfox, with a cracker bon-bon tail. Good, this; because he's evidently "going off" with a bang, as cracker bonbons do.

The Boy is in a troubled dream. What is its moral? "Enough is as good as a Feast?"

I asked myself all this. I looked at the picture not once, but a hundred times. I turned it upside down. I slept on it.

At last I determined on holding a committee of Little Boys who had eaten too much Plum-Pudding in their time, who would give me their "Experiences."

Alas! most Little Boys denied ever having eaten too much. Some said you *couldn't* eat too much. All thought it quite natural that this little boy in the picture should be punished for recklessness by a nightmare; but, for themselves, they never dreamed, and certainly not after Plum-Pudding.

They all promised to write to me on the first occasion. I gave 'em a lovely plum-pudding each, and provided a dormitory.

While they were hard at work, stuffing, the parents came down on me.

Legal proceedings were threatened. I was to be taken up for enticing little boys away from their homes with plum-pudding bait.

In vain I attempted an explanation that this was an experiment in the interest of art. No. They tore their children from the puddings, and dashed away in carriages.

Only Jack Horner remained in a corner; but he had brought his own pie, and was, as usual, congratulating himself on his marvellous virtue.

That humbug, Jack Horner! I took him by his left leg, because he wouldn't say his prayers—he would not be Christmassy except with his pie—and threw him down stairs, where he came in sharp contact with little Red Riding Hood stuffing Goosey Goosey Gander for dinner.

Then I sat down to my goose, my turkey, and an enormous plum-pudding—to experiment on myself. Perhaps this would be a *key* to the dream.

Sir, I inclose Dr.'s certificate—"Pudding on the brain." I cannot write any more. All I can do is to sign my name, and, being Christmassy and hearty, to say—Bless us, one and all, at this happy time! Bless us, bless us! and all round the fireside.

Yours ever, F. C. BURNARD.

THE LAST TOAST: "THE LADIES."

He holds the slender glass on high,
The red wine flashes bright,
To close the Christmas revelry—
One toast is our's to-night.
One magic word,—and follows fast
The loud applauding hand;
We honour as in ages past—
"The ladies of the land!"

A spell is in the words, supreme
Alike o'er youth and age;
And first love's unforgotten dream,
Once more illumines the page.
Remembrance paints the past as fair,
As erst it seem'd to be,
When tender eyes and glossy hair
Held ev'ry heart in fee.

And youth, with high hopes for all days,
Looks onward through the years;
Alas, the part that each man plays,
May give the cue for tears.
Though love is won, yet love is lost,
Too well the sore heart knows;
As oft a sunny pathway's crost
With shadows at its close.

Yet fill your glasses to the brim,
Fill high, each welcome guest,
Let ev'ry man's swift fancy limn
The face he loves the best.
One toast to crown our festive day—
We'll drink—whate'er befall;
And own, rejoicing in her sway,
That woman rules us all.

H. SAVILE CLARKE.

STEERING FOR HOME.

Blow, thou bitter northern gale,
Heave, thou heavy, surging sea,
Bend the mast and fill the sail,
Let the gallant ship go free.
See, the steersman strong and steady,
Breasts the billows rushing by,
Ever watchful, ever ready,
Firm of hand and quick of eye,
Steering for Home.

Let the waves with angry thud
Shake the ship from stem to stern,
Let the thickly-flying scud
Ever and anon return;
In the wind are cheerful voices,
In the waves a pleasant song,
And the sailor's heart rejoices
As the good ship bounds along,
Steering for Home.

Standing on the briny deck,
Beaten by the blinding spray,
Fearing neither storm nor wreck,
Cheerfully he holds his way.
But an anxious heart is yearning,
Now in hope and now in doubt,
Watching all the ships returning,
Striving hard to make them out,
Steering for Home.

Steersman, bless the bitter gale—
Bless the heavy-surfing sea—
Gaily trim the swelling sail,
Land is looming on the lee.
See! the beacon light is flashing,
Hark! they shout along the shore;
Down the strand the crowd is dashing,
Now thy hardest work is o'er,
Steering for Home.

MASON JACKSON.

"TWAS MERRY IN THE HALL."

'Tis the opening line of an old song which Sir John Gilbert has adopted for the title of this Christmas Illustration, and 'tis obviously appropriate enough. Why, 'twas *always* merry in the olden halls of "Merry Old England." All the year round the Baron's old hall was a scene of jovial merriment and hearty hospitality; to say nothing of many special feasts, high days, holidays, and birthdays, when the tables groaned louder, when the carouse with sack and canary and strong ale was deeper, and there was all manner of dancing and junketing, playing and romping, among the lovers and younger folk. How much, then, is it merrier at Christmas—proverbially "Merry Christmas," the time *par excellence* of all the year for merriment!

We see only a small portion of the hall in our picture; only a short space of the long oaken tables which run round three sides of the old ancestral hall (and more, perhaps, would have been made of the same table-space, but that it has been, for pictorial effect, kept duly subservient to the principal group and incident of the foreground), yet everyone here is surely merry enough, and we have no doubt that every other part of the hall is equally full of blithesome gaiety. That it is Christmas is obvious. Not only are the candelabra and sconces along the wall decked with the plants sacred to the festival, but the holly—most effective employment of it, save that of twining it spirally round columns—is suspended in rich hanging festoons down the middle of the hall, doubtless, through its whole length. And, with most liberal forethought for the lovers, at every point of suspension the mistletoe is interwoven or grouped with it. What the consequences are likely to be we see. What disturbances in the hall and about its table; what irregularities will there not take place beneath that poor little plant; what assaults hoped for or unexpected; what defences of real or pretended reluctance; what sheer fun and frolic of animal spirits! We hardly know what to think of the foremost couple, at least we hardly know what to think of the gentleman, who is struggling to snatch a kiss beneath the mystic berries. As for the lady, there can be no two opinions as to her beauty. Vandyke and Lely would covet such a model both for face and figure; and Sir John Gilbert never hit off with his ready pencil a more graceful, sprightly, roguish, loveable, belle. How tempting are those ruddy lips, wet with nectar; how fascinating those laughing eyes, and how their kindly archness is enhanced by the little curls which, nestling about the forehead, add fresh lustre to the marble whiteness! But the gentleman! He is surely not a match, either in face or figure, for such a pearl. And yet the novel-writer might tell us that there is more than meets the eyes in this attempt of Sir Simon Simple to salute his pretty cousin Kate. Sir Simon, it is true, is but half a booby at present, an unlicked cub; he has been tied hitherto to his mother's apron strings, but, with a little schooling of love, there are materials for the making of a man in him. And then he is the owner of broad acres, conterminous with those of his lovely cousin; and it might turn out, according to such authorities, that the old toppers in the background are closely related to the young people, and they see in this chance gallantry under the mistletoe, in which they take so hearty an interest, the possible union of two ancient houses and two large estates, as well as the closer cementing of two old friendships. For our part, however, we will have no such arrangement or explanation. Our heroine must have a far manlier, handsomer cavalier—indeed, we have no doubt she has one, if not more, already; and that she will be paired off ere long and chatting with some other suitor, like the pair now seated on the farther side of the table. No; this is an eccentric young gentleman, as foolish as he is forward; he is as proud as a peacock, yet as silly as a goose; the butt of the whole neighbourhood, yet so harmless that everybody tolerates and indulges him, if only as a foil to their own superior merit. This Christmas he will be, of all the gentlemen, the most successful—"for the fun of the thing, you know." And so it happens that he approaches the beautiful Kate in all confidence, while she, feigning only a little becoming surprise and reluctance, makes but a feeble resistance, and will allow the priceless boon to be stolen. Ah well-a-day! if we were some—or we may as well say several—years younger, and we had such a chance of theft, we fancy we should appreciate the ecstasy of it more highly than Sir Simon.

It is many a year since Sir John Gilbert, R.A., then only Mr. Gilbert, supplied the first Christmas illustrations to the *Illustrated London News*; and may it be many years before he furnishes the last to our readers! It is always pleasant to meet old friends and renew old acquaintance, although it may or must be at longer intervals, perhaps only from year to year, round our pictorial Christmas board.

A QUIET CHRISTMAS.

Good old woman, sitting on Christmas Day afternoon in the seat of the peaceful, with closed eyes and folded hands, no bit of needlework in the lap, no busy cares in the nodding head, and the Book of Blessing, kept open by the pair of spectacles laid on its pages, lying upon your table close at hand! Dear old woman, you have known the affectionate anxieties of a wife and mother; you have toiled many years in faithful household service; you have meekly suffered, as the best of us must suffer, many a scolding undeserved, many a taunting word, many a haughty or angry look from people not really your betters; you have overcome the world by silent well-doing, in the might of love and faith, and of the Spirit meeting prayer. For you, already in this life upon earth, there are frequent hours and whole days of rest, if not from the outward bustle of a cheerful and useful industry, which is your constant delight, most assuredly from the inward turmoil of a craving heart and thoughts at war against the eternal law. Enjoy this Sabbath of a sound and calm old age, before you go hence to put on the beauty and vigour of a fresh virgin youth, in the bright Future Life, to which you are called by the Saviour's promise, "And I will give you Rest!"

This is the hope, and such is the habitual condition, of the worthy old soul whose afternoon repose affords the pleasant subject of our Illustration. From the shape of her cap, the stuff and make of her other garments, and some articles of the simple furniture hanging on the walls of her rustic dwelling, she would seem to be a Scotch woman; and of her it may well be said, in the words of a Scottish poet—

Yet she is happy, aye, and she is wise,
Although her Bible be her only book;
And she is rich, although her only wealth
Be recollection of a well-spent life,
And expectation of the life to come.

So here we look on that placid face, broad and square in form, clear white in complexion, softly chiselled by the wearing hand of Time into the firm lines and curves that denote a strenuous mental experience, and a decided character, with the ample tresses of silvery hair, not quite beyond curling, that overspread her brows, covering the brain now lulled to quiet slumber. It is a loveable, venerable, much more than respectable, figure of elderly and declining womanhood, attractive and engaging to the eye of genuine moral sensibility, long after the charm of female youth has passed away. Let us wish her yet many a Happy New Year, full of happy working or resting days, before the glorious dawn for her of a heavenly Day of Rest!

THE SLEDGE.

Winter has "a nipping and eager air," the word "eager" being taken in its primary sense of "sharp;" and we sometimes feel that it "bites shrewdly," to use another, primitive phrase, unless the blood in our veins be kept briskly flowing by swift exercise in the open air. For this salutary purpose, in the average climate of Europe north of the Alps, ice and snow have been ordained to form a temporary surface, both for the land and the water, adapted to a variety of locomotive sports. Young and healthy persons, in every country where the winter climate is tolerably steadfast and uniform, reckon upon many days fit for the pleasant recreation of gliding over the glassy floor of frozen water, or else making their hard slides of the compressed substance of thick-bedded snow. The latter device is perhaps oftener resorted to by the industrious boys of our own nation, who certainly do not get their due allowance of good clear ice in our rivers and ponds. The boys of Holland seem, in this respect, to have greatly the advantage of English youngsters in the same latitude, as some of these may have learnt from that entertaining little story, "The Silver Skates," a new edition of which has just appeared. In the northern provinces of Germany, and in most inland parts of the great Continental plain, remote from the dissolving breezes of the ocean, a long continuance of thick ice can usually be relied upon; and skating is practised with more assiduity than amongst ourselves. A contrivance is also in vogue for enabling those ladies who are, perhaps, too timid and delicate for that energetic kind of exercise, to avail themselves of the hardened snow in the roads, or the safe ice, where others use their own feet, in a lake or river; and to be propelled, with agreeable celerity and freedom, in diverse rapid evolutions before the eyes of the world. This conveyance is the light and graceful sledge, which Mr. Kämmerer shows in his picture waiting at the door of a noble town mansion, for the service of that bright young lady, warmly muffled in her cloak and hood with plenty of furs, now bent upon a quick run of three or four miles, pushed and guided by her willing servant. We are so much pleased with her figure and its accessories, that we cannot deny wishing her an agreeable trip in "the Sledge."

POOR ROBIN AND THE FAIRIES.

It is midwinter. On the ground
Lies snow, so beautiful and cold;
Light footprints here and there
Of little birds, upon it found,
Their story, ah so sad! have told
Of restless, quick despair!

My birds, my robins beautiful,
That were so good to stay with me
When all the rest had gone,
The snow-clad earth, the frozen pool,
Are dreary sights for you to see,
Who home, warmth, help have none!

What wonder that you fall, you die,
So starved, so frozen, shelterless?
Ye cannot hear my call.
The crumbs I scatter mournfully
Reach few—the many do not guess
My longing to help all!

I know beneath each frosted hedge,
On every road, each icebound pond,
Lies one of you, past pain.
Nay, sometimes on my window-ledge
A pretty bird I find, beyond
My help so sad and vain!

O singers, that will sing no more!
Dear poets, starved by cruel fate!
Who knows, who weeps, your lot?
Are you, that gave us all your store,
That loved us all, whom none could hate,
By every soul forgot?

Ah, no! I think that in the night
Come fairies, weeping bitterly,
And o'er you scatter flowers!
So if to me came children bright
And kissed, and wept, and mourned for me,
How sweet were my last hours!

EDWARD ROSE.

THE LAST VOYAGE.

On the caressing bosom of the deep
The young ship lay when she was newly born,
Reposing like an infant half asleep
Within its mother's arms at early morn.

But soon she spread aloft her snowy sails,
While loud huzzas were echoed from the shore,
And forth she went before the favouring gales,
And for a time the ship was seen no more.

She bore the hopeful young to distant shores,
Brought back the old to home and sweet repose;
She gathered treasures for the merchants' stores,
And fearless bade defiance to her foes.

Full many a tempest whistled through her shrouds
And angry oceans lashed her oaken sides;
Now reeling under light'ning-riven clouds,
Now riding safely on pellucid tides.

On her white decks have young elastic feet
Full often tripp'd it in the merry dance,
Whilst in the pauses of the music sweet
Love answered love with many a tender glance.

But now there is no footfall on her deck,
She feels no more the steersman's guiding hand;
She lies a helpless and forsaken wreck
Upon a lonely surf-surrounded strand.

'Twas her last voyage—and the setting sun
A parting kiss the wave-worn wanderer gave:
The good old ship, her life of labour done,
Rests in the silence of her watery grave.

MASON JACKSON.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

The expression of delighted surprise, mingled with critical appreciation, which is exquisitely rendered by Mr. Marks in the face of this amiable Virtuoso, tells us a good deal about his characteristic pursuits. He is one of those gentlemen past middle age, enjoying perfect leisure and an ample private income, who find it a tolerable amusement to enter into the special business of purchasers and collectors. In every trade dealing with articles of luxury, of taste and fancy, there are two classes of men, each naturally qualified for their own part in the affair. On the one hand, we behold the sellers; on the other hand, we observe those who are "sold," and who are, at the same time, the buyers. This is the case with picture-dealing and horse-dealing; it is so with the disposal of six dozen bottles of fine old crusted port, warranted of a certain date; with medals, autographs, and rare editions of books; notably also with china, artistic pottery, and porcelain, and the manufactures of Chelsea or Etruria, of Sèvres or Dresden. The rage, indeed, for the acquisition of this last-mentioned kind of ware, commanding high prices for the scarcity, if not the beauty, of some approved patterns, has of late years notoriously risen to a most extravagant pitch. A sum of money to be enumerated with four arithmetical figures has sometimes been demanded and paid for a single piece of moulded and painted clay, which cannot in its merely ornamental design convey any such idea of transcendental grace, or spiritual significance, as might belong to a work of high art, in sculpture or in painting. The "chinamanlacs," as they were presently called, had certainly a right to be foolish with their own money. It would do as much good in the pocket of a shrewd Israelite shopkeeper, somewhere between High Holborn and Leicester Square, as in the pocket of a retired elderly gentleman, a dawdling old bachelor, at his residence in Bayswater. The heirs or legates of the self-complacent purchaser will not be very well pleased when they have got the actual value of his treasured stores, with his library, pictures, and household furniture, duly appraised or set down in an auctioneer's account. But he will then be snugly lying beneath six feet depth of mother earth in Kensal-green, and will not at all mind their calling him "a very silly man."

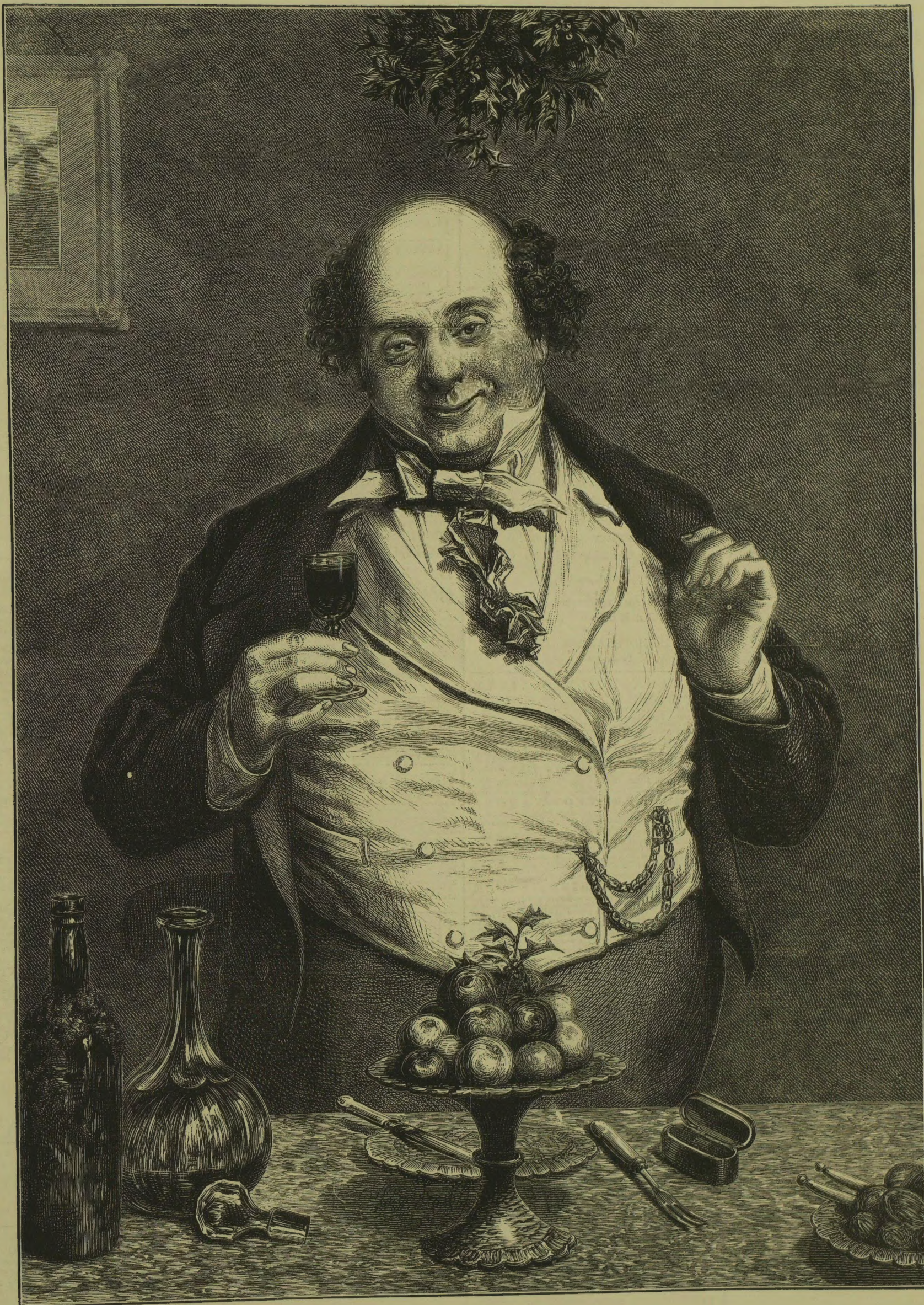
In the mean time, he may fairly consider that he does nobody any harm by the indulgence of this particular whim, and he has heard or read a grave remark that it is, like the practice of artificial horticulture, multiplying endless new varieties of the same kind of blossom, "a sign of a refined mind." This is the social reputation of which Philip Jessamy, Esq., is likely to be mildly ambitious. He has reached his fifty-fourth year, *procul negotiis*, without ever putting hand or brain to any real work, official, professional, or volunteer, either for his own or others' profit; without studying any branch of real knowledge, science, history, politics, or classics; and without training himself to any robust and active sport, riding, shooting, or angling, by which other men preserve the vigour of youth. He does not even care to seek the company of other men at his club. He spends the whole morning in "pottering about" after these coveted and cherished specimens of fancy pottery, the contemplation of which will beguile his solitary afternoon, till he dines and goes to join a silent whist-party. This sort of life appears not ill-suited to the disposition and acquirements of Mr. Jessamy, but we apprehend there are some persons, both among his juniors and those older than he is, who would pronounce it rather too slow, and vacant of living interests. They will, however, be so kind as to leave this innocent gentleman alone; and, if it should so happen that the expectant heir or legatee, whom we might suppose to be a brother or sister, a nephew or cousin, has thought it worth while to send him "a Christmas Present," let him be allowed to open the packing-box and take out the elegant vase, with a feeling of delighted surprise.

We are not particularly curious about the object of his *recherche* gratification in the present instance. It seems to be Oriental china, probably Japanese, and he rather prides himself upon knowing a few of the Japanese marks. But the enormous difference of price, in this quaint commerce of fancy and fashion, between the productions of Oriental and of European manufacturers, has been a great temptation to make the one pass for the other. An instance is mentioned by the Rev. W. J. Loftie, in his "Plea for Art in the House," which should be a caution to over-willing buyers. This was the performance of an ingenious Parisian manufacturer, who made a pair of jars, worth about forty shillings, and sold them at forty guineas under the name of an importation from China. But there is some European art-work of the kind, more especially the early Sèvres, which commands very noble prices for the sake of its originality and authentic renown. The ground colours of Sèvres ware may often be admired for their delicacy of tint, and the little pictures with which it is adorned are very pretty examples of miniature painting. The colour just now most esteemed in the market is that called *Rose Du Barry*, a sort of purplish pink, which was much affected by the lady, its namesake, at the French Court a hundred years ago. It is usually spotted with a diaper of rosebuds, which decoration, to our eye, looks better on a ground of pale green.



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682 in., 684 in., 686 in., 688 in., 690 in., 692 in., 694 in., 696 in., 698 in., 700 in., 702 in., 704 in., 706 in., 708 in., 710 in., 712 in., 714 in., 716 in., 718 in., 720 in., 722 in., 724 in., 726 in., 728 in., 730 in., 732 in., 734 in., 736 in., 738 in., 740 in., 742 in., 744 in., 746 in., 748 in., 750 in., 752 in., 754 in., 756 in., 758 in., 760 in., 762 in., 764 in., 766 in., 768 in., 770 in., 772 in., 774 in., 776 in., 778 in., 780 in., 782 in., 784 in., 786 in., 788 in., 790 in., 792 in., 794 in., 796 in., 798 in., 800 in., 802 in., 804 in., 806 in., 808 in., 810 in., 812 in., 814 in., 816 in., 818 in., 820 in., 822 in., 824 in., 826 in., 828 in., 830 in., 832 in., 834 in., 836 in., 838 in., 840 in., 842 in., 844 in., 846 in., 848 in., 850 in., 852 in., 854 in., 856 in., 858 in., 860 in., 862 in., 864 in., 866 in., 868 in., 870 in., 872 in., 874 in., 876 in., 878 in., 880 in., 882 in., 884 in., 886 in., 888 in., 890 in., 892 in., 894 in., 896 in., 898 in., 900 in., 902 in., 904 in., 906 in., 908 in., 910 in., 912 in., 914 in., 916 in., 918 in., 920 in., 922 in., 924 in., 926 in., 928 in., 930 in., 932 in., 934 in., 936 in., 938 in., 940 in., 942 in., 944 in., 946 in., 948 in., 950 in., 952 in., 954 in., 956 in., 958 in., 960 in., 962 in., 964 in., 966 in., 968 in., 970 in., 972 in., 974 in., 976 in., 978 in., 980 in., 982 in., 984 in., 986 in., 988 in., 990 in., 992 in., 994 in., 996 in., 998 in., 1000 in., 1002 in., 1004 in., 1006 in., 1008 in., 1010 in., 1012 in., 1014 in., 1016 in., 1018 in., 1020 in., 1022 in., 1024 in., 1026 in., 1028 in., 1030 in., 1032 in., 1034 in., 1036 in., 1038 in., 1040 in., 1042 in., 1044 in., 1046 in., 1048 in., 1050 in., 1052 in., 1054 in., 1056 in., 1058 in., 1060 in., 1062 in., 1064 in., 1066 in., 1068 in., 1070 in., 1072 in., 1074 in., 1076 in., 1078 in., 1080 in., 1082 in., 1084 in., 1086 in., 1088 in., 1090 in., 1092 in., 1094 in., 1096 in., 1098 in., 1100 in., 1102 in., 1104 in., 1106 in., 1108 in., 1110 in., 1112 in., 1114 in., 1116 in., 1118 in., 1120 in., 1122 in., 1124 in., 1126 in., 1128 in., 1130 in., 1132 in., 1134 in., 1136 in., 1138 in., 1140 in., 1142 in., 1144 in., 1146 in., 1148 in., 1150 in., 1152 in., 1154 in., 1156 in., 1158 in., 1160 in., 1162 in., 1164 in., 1166 in., 1168 in., 1170 in., 1172 in., 1174 in., 1176 in., 1178 in., 1180 in., 1182 in., 1184 in., 1186 in., 1188 in., 1190 in., 1192 in., 1194 in., 1196 in., 1198 in., 1200 in., 1202 in., 1204 in., 1206 in., 1208 in., 1210 in., 1212 in., 1214 in., 1216 in., 1218 in., 1220 in., 1222 in., 1224 in., 1226 in., 1228 in., 1230 in., 1232 in., 1234 in., 1236 in., 1238 in., 1240 in., 1242 in., 1244 in., 1246 in., 1248 in., 1250 in., 1252 in., 1254 in., 1256 in., 1258 in., 1260 in., 1262 in., 1264 in., 1266 in., 1268 in., 1270 in., 1272 in., 1274 in., 1276 in., 1278 in., 1280 in., 1282 in., 1284 in., 1286 in., 1288 in., 1290 in., 1292 in., 1294 in., 1296 in., 1298 in., 1300 in., 1302 in., 1304 in., 1306 in., 1308 in., 1310 in., 1312 in., 1314 in., 1316 in., 1318 in., 1320 in., 1322 in., 1324 in., 1326 in., 1328 in., 1330 in., 1332 in., 1334 in., 1336 in., 1338 in., 1340 in., 1342 in., 1344 in., 1346 in., 1348 in., 1350 in., 1352 in., 1354 in., 1356 in., 1358 in., 1360 in., 1362 in., 1364 in., 1366 in., 1368 in., 1370 in., 1372 in., 1374 in., 1376 in., 1378 in., 1380 in., 1382 in., 1384 in., 1386 in., 1388 in., 1390 in., 1392 in., 1394 in., 1396 in., 1398 in., 1400 in., 1402 in., 1404 in., 1406 in., 1408 in., 1410 in., 1412 in., 1414 in., 1416 in., 1418 in., 1420 in., 1422 in., 1424 in., 1426 in., 1428 in., 1430 in., 1432 in., 1434 in., 1436 in., 1438 in., 1440 in., 1442 in., 1444 in., 1446 in., 1448 in., 1450 in., 1452 in., 1454 in., 1456 in., 1458 in., 1460 in., 1462 in., 1464 in., 1466 in., 1468 in., 1470 in., 1472 in., 1474 in., 1476 in., 1478 in., 1480 in., 1482 in., 1484 in., 1486 in., 1488 in., 1490 in., 1492 in., 1494 in., 1496 in., 1498 in., 1500 in., 1502 in., 1504 in., 1506 in., 1508 in., 1510 in., 1512 in., 1514 in., 1516 in., 1518 in., 1520 in., 1522 in., 1524 in., 1526 in., 1528 in., 1530 in., 1532 in., 1534 in., 1536 in., 1538 in., 1540 in., 1542 in., 1544 in., 1546 in., 1548 in., 1550 in., 1552 in., 1554 in., 1556 in., 1558 in., 1560 in., 1562 in., 1564 in., 1566 in., 1568 in., 1570 in., 1572 in., 1574 in., 1576 in., 1578 in., 1580 in., 1582 in., 1584 in., 1586 in., 1588 in., 1590 in., 1592 in., 1594 in., 1596 in., 1598 in., 1600 in., 1602 in., 1604 in., 1606 in., 1608 in., 1610 in., 1612 in., 1614 in., 1616 in., 1618 in., 1620 in., 1622 in., 1624 in., 1626 in., 1628 in., 1630 in., 1632 in., 1634 in., 1636 in., 1638 in., 1640 in., 1642 in., 1644 in., 1646 in., 1648 in., 1650 in., 1652 in., 1654 in., 1656 in., 1658 in., 1660 in., 1662 in., 1664 in., 1666 in., 1668 in., 1670 in., 1672 in., 1674 in., 1676 in., 1678 in., 1680 in., 1682 in., 1684 in., 1686 in., 1688 in., 1690 in., 1692 in., 1694 in., 1696 in., 1698 in., 1700 in., 1702 in., 1704 in., 1706 in., 1708 in., 1710 in., 1712 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ENGLISH NAVY.

Under the name of MUSTARD LEAVES, I have introduced a new kind of Sinapism, which has none of the inconveniences inherent to the mustard poultice, as formerly used.

Instead of the many disagreeable and expensive operations required in the application of a sinapism as prepared by the ordinary method, one single leaf, immersed in water for half a minute and immediately after applied to the skin, will have the same effect as produced by a mustard poultice, but without the annoyance of any linen being soiled, and saving the patient and the people near him from the inconvenience of the disagreeable smell and acrid vapour arising out from an ordinary poultice.

But I would rather not commend myself my invention, and refer to the opinion and testimonials of the following eminent Doctors.

LANCET, Feb. 22, 1868.

Analytical Records.

MOUTARDE EN FEUILLES DE RIGOLLOT.

Although the Preparation of an ordinary Mustard Poultice is not a very troublesome proceeding, yet it is sufficiently so in many cases to deter invalids from having recourse in the slightest ailments to the most useful of all mild external applications. Add to this the trouble, the uncertainty of the action of a Mustard Poultice from the inferior quality of the Mustard frequently used, and then it will be widely acknowledged that if any means can be devised whereby some of the trouble and uncertainty are lessened, a desirable object will have been attained. Some proposed substitutes for a Mustard Poultice are not to be relied upon, since their activity depends mainly upon Capsicum, and not the active principles of Mustard Seed; but in the Mustard Leaves of M. de Rigollet we have, it is believed, a reliable and very ready means of obtaining the erysipelatous effects of Mustard. These leaves are so smooth and flexible on the outside as to convey the notion that the material entering into their composition consists of Leather. This is not the case, however; while the interior of the leaves are covered with a thickish layer of a material which, on analysis with the microscope, and by the taste, one has no difficulty in declaring to be flour of black Mustard Seed, with a considerable proportion of husk.

RIGOLLOT'S MUSTARD LEAVES.

MEDICAL TIMES, Feb. 8, 1868.

RIGOLLOT'S MUSTARD LEAVES.

23, Henrietta-street, London.

This preparation has the advantage of being portable, cleanly, convenient, and effective; we believe, too, that it is what it pretends to be—that is, a real preparation of Mustard. A specimen happened to reach us just at the moment when a member of our household happened to be complaining of pain in the back. "Flat experimentum" was the order of the day, and one of the leaves, about five inches by three, was moistened with tepid water and applied at once. It took effect immediately, and in five minutes the patient cried, "Hold, enough!" and presented a vivid red patch at the place from which the leaf was removed. Wherever Mustard Poultices are much in request the convenient, effective, and, I think we may add, the cheap preparation of M. Rigollet is sure to become a favourite.

RIGOLLOT'S PAPER is Sold in Three

Different Forms:—

1. In Boxes containing ten leaves of one decimetre square surface. That shape is the most convenient for home treatment, for family and travelling use.
2. In Rollers forming a single strip. A convenient shape to put a sinapism circle round the body in cases of cholera.
3. In Boxes containing twenty-five leaves. Model of the national navy and marine hospitals.

Sold Retail by all Chemists and Druggists.
Whole sale, 82, Southwark-street, London.

ICELAND-MOSS POULTICE.

DR. LELIEVRE'S ICELAND-MOSS

INSTANTANEOUS POULTICE.

APPROVED BY THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.
ADOPTED BY THE HOSPITALS OF PARIS, BY THE
MILITARY AMBULANCES AND THE NAVY HOSPITALS,
&c., &c.

The ICELAND-MOSS POULTICE is exempt from all the inconvenience inseparable from poultices made from linseed, which soil the bedding, rapidly ferment, give out a most unpleasant odour, and are almost invariably prepared from rancid and adulterated meal.

To use the new Poultice it is only requisite to submit it to the action of a small quantity of water, either boiling, lukewarm, or cold, until it becomes thoroughly distended, and then to apply it to the part affected, covering it with either gutta-serena tissue or goldbeaters' skin or waxed linen. It thus supersedes the use of linen, which is often very scarce among single persons and in humble households.

The chief advantages of the new Poultice are these:—

- 1st. It is unchangeable; the same Poultice can be applied for many days to the skin without undergoing the slightest deterioration.
- 2nd. It will receive and keep upon its surface the most varied medical substances, and will facilitate their application and effect. From this point of view alone, this Poultice is calculated to render the greatest services to the medical art. In the course of an experience acquired during more than one year in the hospitals of Paris, and from which the most favourable results have been obtained, they have been prepared with Sydenham's laudanum, extract of Satureja, phenic acid, arnica, morphia, with perchlorure of iron, &c.
- 3rd. From a surgical point of view they are equally capable of rendering great services. As a matter of fact, saturated with water or any astringent liquid, they can most easily be moulded upon the contused or otherwise affected place and protect it against friction from clothes, &c., and, when left to themselves, they slowly dry, and can then under certain circumstances act as a retaining bandage, remarkable both for its lightness and its homogeneity.

In fact, the ICELAND-MOSS INSTANTANEOUS POULTICE is essentially safe and can render real service to practitioners; finally, it offers to travellers and persons living alone advantages which the ambulance and marine services have quickly utilised, inasmuch as the Minister of War has just adopted it for the military ambulance and hospital services.

FUCUS POULTICES.—A new form of

poultice has been introduced to the notice of the profession by M. Lelievre, a Paris chemist, which is proposed as a substitute for linseed-meal. It consists of a substance extracted from the "Fucus crispus," which can be preserved in sheets, like paper. For use, a piece of suitable size is cut and dipped in warm water. It swells rapidly, softens, and can be immediately employed as a poultice. A very favourable report on the substance was presented to the Academy of Medicine by M. Jules Lefort; and M. Gosselin, Verneuil, and Demarquay, who had used it, praised it highly, claiming for it the advantage that the poultices do not dry, do not slip from the places to which they are applied, have no unpleasant odour, do not soil linen, and can be used over again many times. The substance would thus appear to have a place intermediate between linseed-meal and spongio-piline, and probably would be capable of much more extensive use than the latter, which is difficult to keep accurately applied, and soon becomes cold. (The Lancet, Feb. 13, 1875.)

This Poultice is patented in the United Kingdom; it is sold in two forms:—

In Packets containing 6 Leaves, 8 in. by 5 in.; or in one Sheet 24 in. by 9 in.
WHOLESALE—82, SOUTHWARK-STREET, LONDON.

WHENEVER A POULTICE IS

WANTED, PLEASE ASK YOUR CHEMIST FOR THE (NEW POULTICE) DR. LELIEVRE'S, FAR SUPERIOR TO LINSEED OR BREAD POULTICES, AND CHEAPER.

The Iceland Moss Poultice (patented) is exempt from all the inconveniences inseparable from poultices made with Linseed or Bread, the spoil the linen, bedding, &c., dry up on the edges, rapidly ferment; giving a most unpleasant odour, and no dependence can be placed on the quality and freshness of the linseed meal; this "New Poultice" is instantaneous, for it is ready in a few seconds, and offers the following advantages:—

- It can be cut to any size.
- It can be used with hot or cold water.
- It can be used with any lotion or chemicals several times.
- It keeps good in any climate for years.

WHO is MRS. WINSLOW?—As this question is frequently asked, we shall simply say that she is a lady who for upwards of thirty years has untiringly devoted her time and talents as a female physician and nurse, principally among children. She has especially studied the constitution and wants of this numerous class, and, as a result of this effort and practical knowledge obtained in a lifetime spent as nurse and physician, she has compounded a Soothing Syrup for Children. It operates like magic, giving rest and health, and is, moreover, sure to regulate the bowels. In consequence of this article, Mrs. Winslow is becoming world-renowned as a benefactor of her race. Children certainly do rise up and bless her. Especially is this the case in this city. Vast quantities of the Soothing Syrup are daily sold and used here. We think Mrs. Winslow's name will be remembered by this invaluable article, and we sincerely believe thousands of children have been saved from an early grave by its timely use, and that millions yet unborn will share its benefits and unite in calling her blessed. No mother has discharged her duty to her suffering little ones in our opinion, until she has given it the benefit of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. Try it, mothers; try it now.—Ladies' Visitor, New York City.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP.

Dépôt, 493, Oxford-street, London.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP.

Pleasant to Take.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

is Perfectly Safe.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Soothes the Child.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Gives Rest to the Child.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Gives Rest to the Mother.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP.

Sold by all Chemists.

A DOWN-TOWN MERCHANT, having

passed several sleepless nights, disturbed by the agonies and cries of a suffering child, and becoming convinced that Mrs. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP was just the article needed, procured a supply for the child. On reaching home and acquainting his wife with what he had done, she refused to have it administered to the child, as she was strongly in favour of homeopathy. That night the child passed in suffering, and the parents without sleep. Returning outside the day following, the father found the baby still worse; and, while contemplating another sleepless night, the mother stepped from the room to attend to some domestic duties, and left the father with the child. During her absence he administered a portion of the soothing syrup to the baby, and said nothing. That night all hands slept well, and the little fellow awoke in the morning bright and happy. The mother was delighted with the sudden and wonderful change; and, although at first offended at the deception practised upon her, has continued to use the syrup, and suffering babies and restless nights have been banished. A single trial of the syrup never yet failed to relieve the baby and overcome the prejudices of the mother.—New York Sun.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Cures Dysentery.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Cures Diarrhoea.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Cures Wind Colic.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Relieves all Pain.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Softens the Gums.

ADVICE TO MOTHERS.—Are you broken

in your rest by a sick child, suffering with the pain of cutting teeth? Go at once to a Chemist and get a bottle of Mrs. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP. It will relieve the poor sufferer immediately; it is perfectly harmless; it produces natural, quiet sleep by relieving the child from pain, and the little cherub awakes "as bright as a button." It has long been in use in America, and it is highly recommended by medical men; it is very pleasant to take; it soothes the child, it softens the gums, allays all pain, relieves wind, regulates the bowels, and is the best known remedy for dysentery and diarrhoea, whether arising from teething or other causes. Be sure and ask for Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, and see that "Curtis and Perkins, New York and London," is on the outside wrapper. No mother should be without it. Sold by all Medicine-Dealers, at 1s. 1½d. Manufactory, 493, Oxford-street, London.

VALUABLE DISCOVERY for the HAIR.

If your hair is turning grey or white, or falling off, use THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER; for it will positively restore, in every case, grey or white hair to its original colour, without leaving the disagreeable smell of most "Restorers." It makes the hair charmingly beautiful, as well as promoting the growth of the hair on bald spots, where the glands are not decayed.

This preparation has never been known to fail in restoring the hair to its natural colour and gloss in from eight to twelve days. It promotes growth, and prevents the hair falling out, or irritating dandruff, and leaving the scalp in a clean, healthy condition.

It imparts peculiar vitality to the roots of the hair, restoring it to its youthful freshness and vigour. Daily applications of this preparation for a week or two will surely restore faded, grey, or white hair to its natural colour and richness.

It is not a dye, nor does it contain any colouring matter or offensive substance whatever. Hence it does not soil the hands, the scalp, or even white linen, but procures the colour within the substance of the hair.

It may be had of any respectable Chemist, Perfumer, or Dealer in Toilet Articles in the Kingdom, at 3s. 6d. per bottle. In case the dealer has not "The Mexican Hair Renewer" in stock and will not procure it for you, it will be sent direct by rail, carriage paid, on receipt of 4s. in stamps, to any part of England.—Prepared by HENRY C. GALLUP, 493, Oxford-street, London.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Enlivens the Scalp.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Prevents Dandruff.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Restores the Colour of the Hair.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Prevents Hair from Falling.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Prevents Hair from Falling Out.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

will cause Luxuriant Growth.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

for Renewing the Hair.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

Causes Luxuriant Growth.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER.

Sold by most Chemists, Perfumers, and Hairdressers in Great Britain, and all the Colonies.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

has gained for itself the highest reputation, and a decided preference over all other "hair-dressings," as evinced from certificates and testimonials from the most respectable sources. Being compounded with the greatest care—combining, as it does, all the most desirable qualities of the best hair preparations of the day, without the objectionable ones—it may be relied on as the very best known to chemistry for restoring the natural colour to the hair, and causing new hair to grow on bald spots, unless the hair glands are decayed; for, if the glands are decayed and gone no stimulant can restore them; but if, as is often the case, the glands are only torpid, THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER will renew their vitality, and a new growth of hair will follow. Read the following Testimonial:—

From Messrs. Wm. Hayes and Co., Chemists, 12, Grafton-street, Dublin:—"We are recommending THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER to all our customers as the best of the kind as we have been told by several of our friends who tried it, that it has a wonderful effect in restoring and strengthening their hair."

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER.

Ask your Chemist for it.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER

is Stainless and Colourless.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER.

Sold everywhere at 3s. 6d. per bottle.

THE words THE MEXICAN HAIR

RENEWER is a Trade Mark; and the public will please see the words are on the Wrapper of the Bottle, and the name H. C. GALLUP is blown in the bottle.

The Mexican Hair Renewer. Price 3s. 6d. Directions in German, French, and Spanish. Prepared by H. C. Gallup, 493, Oxford-street, London.

ESTABLISHED

1831.

NONE

GENUINE

EXCEPT

IN

PINK PAPER

WRAPPERS.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S

WORLD'S HAIR RESTORER.

AMONG THE CULTIVATED AND REFINED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THIS RENOWNED PREPARATION IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED FAVOURITE—WITH BOTH SEXES. OVER FORTY YEARS' TRIAL AND EXPERIENCE HAVE ESTABLISHED ITS SUPERIORITY AND EXCELLENCE—IT IS SO UNIFORMLY GRATEFUL AND BENEFICIAL TO THE HAIR THAT IT IS WITH JUSTICE CALLED THE NATURAL STRENGTHENER OF THE HUMAN HAIR. IT IS NOT A DYE.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S

WORLD'S HAIR RESTORER.

IT CANNOT FAIL TO RESTORE

GREY HAIR TO ITS YOUTHFUL COLOUR, GLOSS, AND BEAUTY. WHEN THE HAIR TURNS GREY, LOSES ITS LUSTRE, AND FALLS OUT, IT SIMPLY REQUIRES NOURISHMENT. MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S WORLD'S HAIR RESTORER, BY ITS GENTLE TONIC ACTION, STRENGTHENS AND INVIGORATES THE HAIR, AND, BY THE OPERATION OF NATURAL CAUSES, GREY OR WHITE HAIR IS QUICKLY RESTORED TO ITS YOUTHFUL COLOUR, GLOSS, AND BEAUTY. IT WILL STOP ITS FALLING, AND INDUCE A HEALTHY AND MOST LUXURIANT GROWTH. USE NO OTHER PREPARATION WITH IT, NOT EVEN OIL OR POMADE, OR ZYLO-BALSAMUM.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S

WORLD'S HAIR RESTORER

IS THE BEST.

BECAUSE IT IS MADE FROM THE CHOICEST MATERIALS, AND PREPARED WITH THE UTMOST CARE AND SKILL. OVER FORTY YEARS THE FAVOURITE PREPARATION, ENJOYING BY FAR THE LARGEST SALE, IT MUST BE THE BEST. IT DOES NOT DYE THE HAIR, BUT STRENGTHENS IT. GREY HAIRS SOON DISAPPEAR. BY ITS GENTLE TONIC ACTION THE ROOTS ARE STRENGTHENED. THE SOFT AND SILKY TEXTURE OF HEALTHY HAIR FOLLOWS ITS USE.

CAUTION!—The Genuine only in Pink Wrappers.

Sold by all Chemists, Perfumers, and Dealers in Toilet Articles, in only one size. Large Bottles.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S WORLD HAIR RESTORER.

Mrs. S. A. ALLEN

manufactures two entirely distinct Preparations for the Hair.

One or the other is suited to every condition of the Human Hair. Both are never required at one time. Instructive printed matter as to both Preparations, in all languages, enclosed free to any address from Principal Depot, 114 and 116, Southampton-row, London, Eng. Every Chemist and Dealer in Toilet Articles has both Preparations.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S ZYLO-BALSAMUM.

MRS. S. A. ALLEN'S

ZYLO-BALSAMUM.

For the Growth and Preservation of the Hair.

A SIMPLE TONIC AND DRESSING

OF INESTIMABLE VALUE TO BOTH SEXES. THE FAVOURITE WITH THE YOUNG AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE NO GREY HAIR, OR WHO, HAVING GREY HAIR, DO NOT WISH TO RESTORE IT TO ITS YOUTHFUL COLOUR. IT IS A PREVENTATIVE. THE HAIR FROM ITS EARLIEST GROWTH DEMANDS OF EACH SOME CARE AND CULTIVATION. IF IT RECEIVED PROPER CARE AND CULTIVATION WE SHOULD SEE LESS GREY HAIR AND FEWER BALD HEADS. ZYLO-BALSAMUM MAY BE USED BY THE MOST YOUTHFUL AND THE MOST ELDERLY, NEVER FAILING TO ESTABLISH ITSELF IN GREAT FAVOUR WITH EACH. IT WILL NOT CHANGE THE COLOUR OF THE HAIR, BUT BY EARLY USE IT WILL PREVENT THE HAIR FROM TURNING GREY OR FALLING OUT. IT CLEANSSES THE HAIR, GIVES TO IT A HEALTHY VIGOUR AND GROWTH, REMOVES ALL DANDRUFF, AND IMPARTS A MOST DELIGHTFUL FRAGRANCE. IT IS A CLEAR, TRANSPARENT LIQUID, WITH NO SEDIMENT.

NOTE—IT IS URGENTLY RECOMMENDED TO ALL NOT TO USE ANY OIL OR POMADE OR ANY PREPARATION FOR THE HAIR, WITH ZYLO-BALSAMUM.

CAUTION!—The Genuine only in Bluish Grey Wrappers.

Sold by all Chemists, Perfumers, and Dealers in Toilet Articles in only one size—Large Glass Stoppered Bottles.

A TOILET LUXURY.

VAN DUZER and RICHARDS'S

DOUBLE-DISTILLED

BAY RUM

(California Violet Brand)

FOR THE TOILET, NURSERY, AND BATH.

Put up in three sizes, Toilet Hock Bottles, 2s. 6d., 5s., and 8s.

VAN DUZER and RICHARDS'S

Sole Importers,

114 and 116, SOUTHAMPTON-ROW, LONDON.

None Genuine except our Name on each Label.

Supplied by all Chemists and Dealers in Toilet Articles.

CRYSTAL PALACE

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COSTUME EXHIBITIONS.

SEVEN PRIZE MEDALS

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ONE HONOURABLE MENTION

were awarded to

MESSRS. D. NICHOLSON and CO.,

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COSTUMES SHOWN IN EIGHT OF THE PRINCIPAL CLASSES.

THE COLLECTION OF COSTUMES FROM BOTH PALACES ARE NOW ON SALE.

700 ILLUSTRATIONS of the NEWEST COSTUMES, PALETOTS, JACKETS, &c., with prices of the patterns cut in paper, post-free.

1000 PATTERNS of NEW SILKS, Black and Coloured, post-free, from 1s. 1½d. to 12s. 6d. per yard. Bought previous to the great advance in raw silk.

500 PATTERNS of NEW DRESS FABRICS, post-free, in all the latest styles and colourings.

LADIES RESIDENT IN THE COUNTRY ARE INVITED TO WRITE FOR THE ABOVE.

REAL SEAL PALETOTS, in loose or fitting shapes, from 5s. to 30s.

MATALASSE CLOTH long Paletots, trimmed Silver Fox or Raccoon, 2s. to 10s.

SILK MATALASSE PALETOTS, lined throughout and trimmed with fur, from 4s.

D. NICHOLSON and CO.,

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BABY-LINEN AND JUVENILE DRESSES.

A large Assortment of New Styles in Infants' Long Cloaks, Pelisses, Robes, Frocks, &c. Costumes for Children from Three to Twelve Years, in all New Materials. The New Tyrolean, Spanish, and Nautical Suits for Boys of all Ages. Every Article of Apparel for Children of both sexes kept in stock.

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A Superior Collection of New Patterns in every Article of Ladies' Underclothing. Good work guaranteed. A costly illustrated Book of the Goods in this department, with Estimates for Wedding Trousseaux, Layettes and Indian Outfits sent post-free.

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FURS! FURS! FURS

Russian Tail Boas, 4s. 11d., 5s. 11d., to 12s. 9d. Fur Sets, for Trimming Jackets, in Beaver, Genet, Skunk, Chinchilla Sable, &c., from 10s. to £25. Sealskin Muffs, Ties, and Cuffs, and Sealskin Hats and Caps in great variety. Muffs, Cuffs, and Collarettes in every description of fashionable Fur.

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